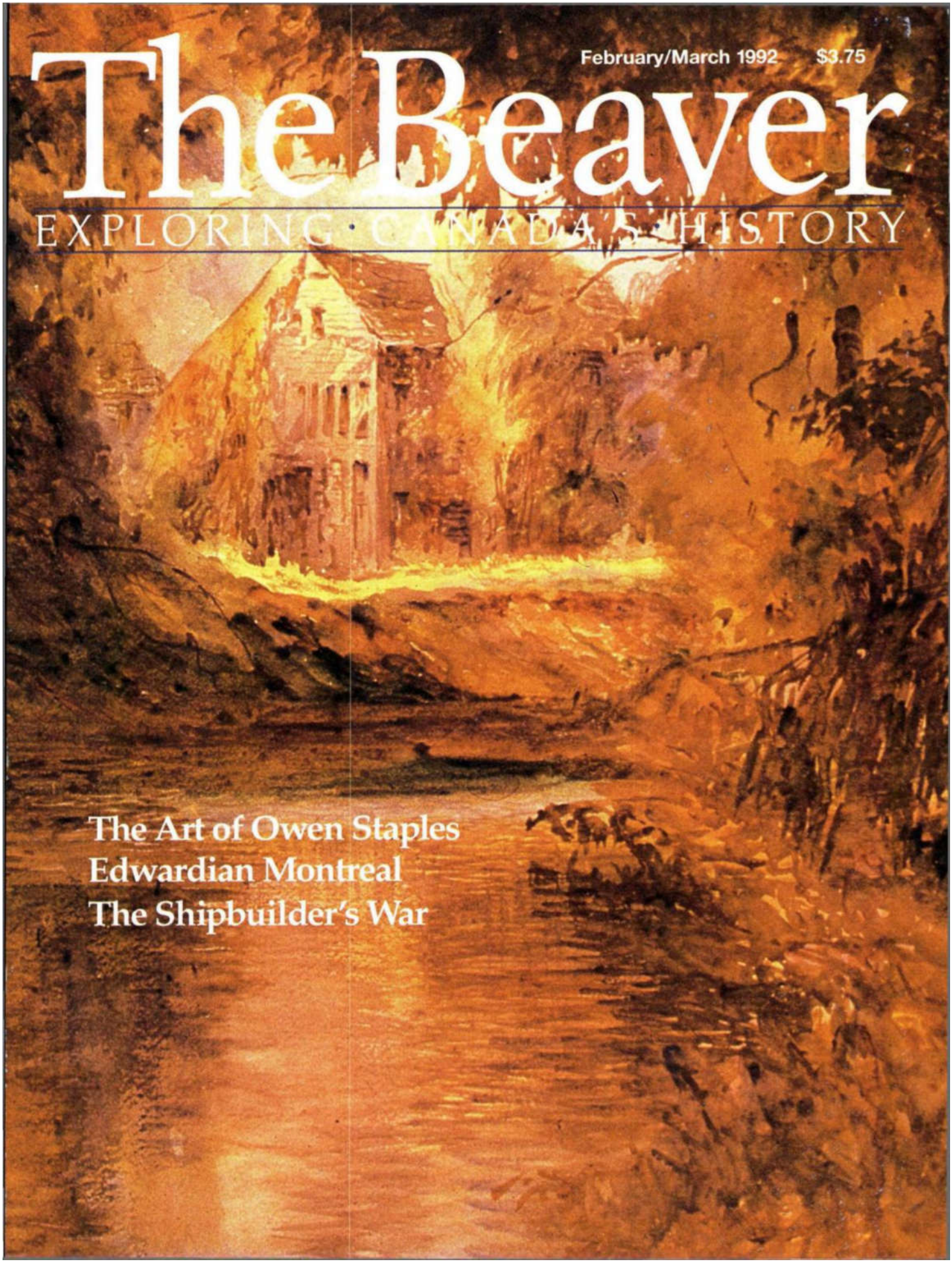
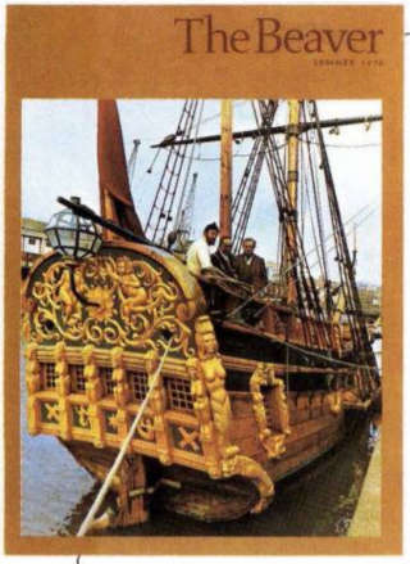
February/March 1992 $3.75

The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY



The Art of Owen Staples
Edwardian Montreal
The Shipbuilder's War



The Beaver

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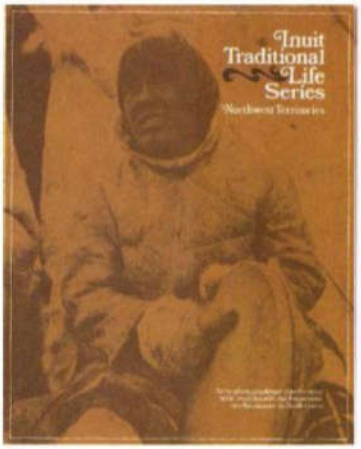

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Editor:
Christopher Dafoe
Managing Editor:
Carol Preston

Advertising Representative:
Sandra Waller
496 Cranbrooke Ave.,
North York, Ontario,
M5M 1N7
(416) 782-7401.

Advisory Board:
Shirlee A. Smith
Michael Bliss
William Nobleman
Rolph Huband

Cover:
Servos Grist Mill, Niagara-on-the-Lake, 1910. By Owen Staples.

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The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

4 EXPLORATIONS
Nothing in the Mail.

6 OWEN STAPLES: IMAGES OF HISTORY
Old Canada in watercolours and oils.

12 'A REMARKABLE FINE SHIP'
Sir James Yeo and the 'St. Lawrence', 1813-1814.
BY BRUCE WISHART

23 HIGH LIFE AND LOW LIFE
A scrapbook of Edwardian Montreal.
BY GEORGE E. MCELROY

29 ALONG THE OPEONGO ROAD
Memories of Canada's first Polish settlement.
BY BRENDA LEE-WHITING

34 WHEN THE GOING WAS BAD
St. John's to Port Aux Basques by rail.
BY LES HARDING

37 INLAND FROM THE BAY
Mapping the fur trade, 1791.
BY JOHN JACKSON

43 JOURNEY TO AN ECLIPSE
Intrepid astronomers go North, 1860.
BY J. E. KENNEDY

47 BOOKS / 56 THE PACKET

60 WRITERS OF HISTORY
CHRISTOPHER MOORE: Fowke-lore.

Nothing in the Mail

When Bernard Shaw travelled across England by train a hundred years ago he carried with him a large paper bag filled with unanswered correspondence. As the train carried him toward his next speaking engagement, Shaw would reach into his "grab-bag", select a letter at random and compose a reply. Some replies filled a small postcard. Others ran to several pages. Shaw's collected letters, edited by Dan H. Laurence, fill three hefty volumes. His uncollected letters — if we could track them down — might fill several more. In a lifetime that almost filled a century Shaw wrote thousands of letters.

He lived in a letter-writing age. The Victorians were addicted to correspondence and the habit continued on into the early years of our own century. People who travelled abroad wrote letters to friends and family members at home. On a boat moving slowly across an ocean or on a train chugging across a continent there was time to fill pages of notepaper with thoughts and impressions. Settlers in America wrote long letters to loved ones at home and in those yellowing pages of often difficult-to-read handwriting we get vivid pictures of our country as it once was. If there was not enough room on the paper, they wrote across what they had already written. Eye-strain is an occupational hazard for historians who deal with Victorian letters and journals. It has been said, for example, that one of the reasons that no new biography of the enormously interesting and important businessman and trader Donald A. Smith (Lord Strathcona) has appeared is that Smith's handwriting is almost impossible to decipher.

In remote outposts in the nineteenth century mail might take a year to arrive, but in the large cities of the East there were several deliveries a day and people with time on their hands exchanged letters, even if they saw each other frequently. Many of their letters have come down to us and are available in archives and libraries. Thousands of other letters are waiting to be discovered in attics and vaults.

Almost every family has its own residue of letters from the past, even if it is only a small bundle tied with a ribbon containing letters written by grandfather to grandmother during a business trip to the West Coast by train in 1897. Others may find, as I recently did, trunks of family letters dating well back into the last century and bringing to life people that we had formerly only known vaguely by name.

Letters form part of the raw material of history. We cannot speak directly with the dead, but in their letters and journals we catch a glimpse of their world and come to know something of what they thought and did. Without letters, journals and other documents the writing of history might well be all speculation and romance.

Just as the letters of Margery Paston give a human face to fifteenth-century England, the letters of our own kith and kin help to give a human face to Victorian Canada. Writing to his mother, Mrs. Hugh Macdonald, in 1856, John A. Macdonald gave vent to his innermost feelings: "I am carrying on a war against that scoundrel George Brown and I will teach him a lesson that he never learnt before. I shall prove him a most dishonest, dishonourable fellow & in doing so I will only pay him a debt I owe him for abusing me for months together in his newspaper." Much is known of John A. Macdonald's life and thought, but in that complaint to his mother we catch a glimpse of the all-too-human face behind the formal portrait.

Letitia Hargrave, writing to her mother from York Factory in March 1844, introduces an element of farce and gives us an unaccustomed glimpse of domestic life at an HBC outpost: "Mary Clark is quite well & it seems miraculous that she is so, having fallen down a hatch into a cellar under the kitchen in spite of all Gibeault's cautions, bright daylight and the use of her eyes. She asked the Cook for something, he opened the hatch to bring it up from the cellar to her. While he was getting it she fell down, how I have never found out but she came to me with her brow cut & declaring her ribs were broken. The Dr told her if her ribs were broken she would not tell it so briskly."

A letter by farmer John Elcome, written from Bangor Township, Ontario, to his granddaughter in England in the early 1870s, gives a picture of life in Canada as seen by a man who valued the freedom enjoyed by ordinary people in the settlements of the New World: "I often think I should like to take a peep at you all over there in Old England, for England with all her faults I love her still, but not well enough for to wish myself back again. No. No. I had enough of her bondage while living there. But if I had an independent fortune I would certainly come back to Old England and enjoy it; but while I have my living to get in anyway I say 'Canada Forever' for me at least for there is no bowing and scraping here to your employer. No! Jack's as good as his master here. And another thing which I like, there is no trudging along here of a morning with a basket with your day's vic-

tuals in it ever so long before daylight. Oh no! Where you work here there you have your board, and your lodgings, if you like, into the bargain; eat at the same table with your employer. We don't call them our master here. We don't own any mastership in this country."

Elcome, who had been forced to leave England because of his activities as a Chartist, felt strongly about the opportunities available to ordinary people in the new Dominion: "You know as well as I can tell you that a labouring man in England can never become anything but a labouring man whilst here he can in a few years become a land owner and a freeholder and not only himself but likewise his sons after him and their sons for several generations; and the daughters will be sure to marry men that have land of their own; while in England a man may work hard all his life, till he is old and past work, and what then? Why he may go into the unions [workhouse] and be treated nearly as bad as a criminal who has broken the laws of his country. And if his dear old wife is still living they will be separated. That's the biggest blot upon the laws of dear old England."

John Elcome's letter, for all its roughness, gives us a vivid glimpse of a way of life and an attitude of mind that helped shape Canada in the Victorian age.

Letters can also supply the details that add to our vision of the past. Some years ago, while looking through a June 1930 issue of *The Beaver*, I recognized my great-grandfather in a group photograph taken at Moose Factory in 1892. Great-grandfather, W.G. Parmelee, was Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, and had travelled to Moose Factory with a group led by HBC Commissioner C.C. Chipman. Although I should have known better, I was surprised to learn that the Chipman party had arrived at Moose Factory by canoe.

Quite by accident while sifting through family papers recently, I came across a letter written by my great-grandfather in Moose Factory on the day in 1892 when the picture was taken. The letter, written in pencil and sent off to his wife in Ottawa with the canoe brigade, makes brief reference to the journey: "Aside from wet weather we had on the road down and a few rough carrying places the trip was a very pleasant one. More so down that it will be up. There is a goose hunt on the tapis for tomorrow and we will probably be ready to start back about the last of the week. The route back by the Abitibi is longer and rougher than the one we came, so we expect it will take not less than 15 or 16 days to get to Timiskaming."

The domestic arrangements at Moose Factory seemed comfortable: ". . . The place is rather pretty, the Indian end picturesque with the number of tipis and tents on the bank of the river. I don't think anyone here is in much of a hurry; rather a lazy life. I went over to the Bishop's this forenoon — had a good chat

Left to right—Ven. Archdeacon Vincent, of Albany; Allan Nicolson, Southern Department Accountant; W. G. Parmelee, Canadian Commissioner of Customs; James G. Christie, Clerk, Moose Factory; E. K. Beeston, General Inspector, Hudson's Bay Company; C. C. Chipman, Commissioner, Hudson's Bay Company; Dr. A. D. M. Grant, Medical Officer, Moose Factory; D. C. McTavish, Chief Trader, Rupert's River District; Joseph G. Vincent, Clerk, Department Office; W. K. Broughton, Factor, Moose River District; James Vincent, Junior Chief Trader, Albany District; Christopher J. R. Jobson, Post Manager, Moose River District.

with him and called on Mr N— and his new Montreal wife. They are very snugly situated. Rooms not large but prettily furnished — knicknacks and as in our more civilized country, a beautiful brown India rug. I don't think they suffer overmuch here. The Co's warehouses are well filled. The annual ship left the morning we arrived, but is said to be anchored some 20 miles out — waiting for the wind and tide, I suppose."

There was, Parmelee noted, "plenty of good milk and butter here. Gardens fairly good — large quantities of potatoes raised. No grain, though I don't see why — vegetables fairly good — green peas and string beans all just in — currants in quantities — no other fruit have I noticed."

It is a sketchy view of Moose Factory, 1892, somewhat like a faded photograph, but we are seeing a vanished time through human eyes and we can add the details to others we already know and so enhance the picture.

Parmelee gives us a brief snapshot of one of the canoemen who told him that he had once been an inmate in a school for boys in Eastern Canada. "He went out one recess and forgot to go back again and took to the woods in preference". Canada's own scholar gypsy.

We live in an age that has forgotten how to write letters — or, perhaps, has neglected to write them. The correspondence of our grandparents and great-grandparents filled trunks and cartons in the attic and created problems when the time came to sell the old family home. For most of us, our "collected letters" in time to come might fill a shoe-box.

For the historian of the future there may be nothing in the mail. This is the age of the long-distance telephone call, the fax and the annual Christmas card. A hundred years from now our great-grandchildren may look back and wonder who we were.

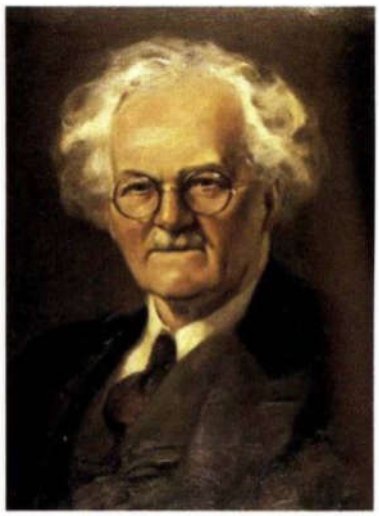
— Christopher Dafoe

The Beaver / 6

● Images of History

Owen Staples

PAINTER OF CANADA'S PAST



Owen Staples was born in 1866 in the village of Stoke-under-Ham, Somerset, England, and came to Canada at the age of six with his parents. The Staples family settled at Hamilton, Ontario, where Owen's father was employed as head gardener at Dundurn Castle, the home of Sir Allan McNab.

When Owen was 10 his father died and the family moved to Rochester, New York, where his mother obtained work as a nurse. Owen was later employed as a messenger at the Rochester Art Club where he studied under artists Horatio Walker, James Dennis and Harvey Ellis. He later studied at the Philadelphia Academy of Arts under Thomas Eakins and Thomas P. Anshutz, and with George A. Reid in Toronto, as well as at the Art Students' League in New York.

Orphaned in 1880 at the age of 14, Owen returned to Toronto with his brother Johnny where he secured a job at the *Mail* newspaper as a staff artist.

He became a member of the Art Students' League of Toronto, associating with artists such as Fred H. Brigden, C.W. Jefferys, Frederick Challener, Robert Holmes, George A. Reid, John Cotton and Will Alexander.

For almost 60 years Owen Staples wrote articles and produced pen and ink drawings for the *Toronto Telegram*, working closely with the newspaper's founder, John Ross Robertson, on projects associated with the history of the city.

Robertson became Staples' patron, sending him to art school in Philadelphia and later on painting expeditions to Britain and Europe. One of Canada's most prolific artists, Staples travelled extensively and has left a large legacy of paintings of the country as it once was.

He was an active member of the Toronto artistic community for many years, singing in the Mendelssohn Choir, as a longtime member of the Arts and Letters Club and as a celebrated host, with his wife Lillian, at the family home at 69 Hogarth Avenue where the Staples' popular "Sunday afternoons" attracted such well-known figures as Sir Edmund Walker, Fred Brigden, C.W. Jefferys and Augustus Bridle the music critic.

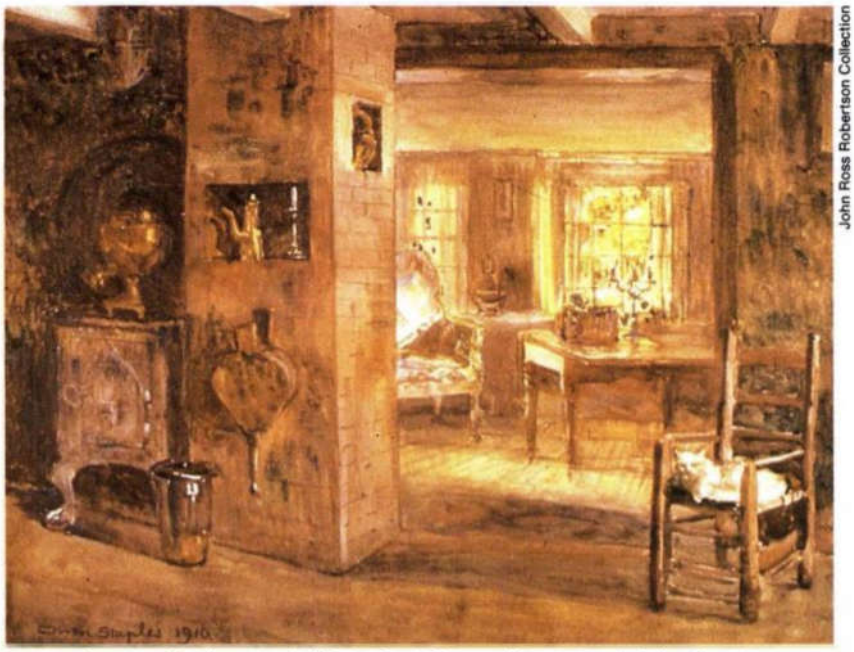
Owen Staples was a man of many parts, with exceptional talent in music, writing, nature study and historical research, as well as in fine art. He is possibly best known for his watercolours and etchings. He was president of the Canadian Painter-Etchers' Society and one of the founding members of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour. Staples also painted in oil, tempera and pastel and was noted for his outstanding pen drawings.

He remained active to the end of his life. When, during his final years, his right arm was paralyzed by a stroke, he learned to work with his left hand.

Owen Staples died on 6 December 1949. His work is preserved in collections at the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, the John Ross Robertson Collection in the Metro Toronto Library and in many private collections.

Weeping birch in the garden of the Staples home, 69 Hogarth Avenue, Toronto. Oil painting by Owen Staples.

This profile of Owen Staples is based on material supplied by the artist's grandson, Rod Staples, of Scarborough, Ontario. It is one of an occasional series on painters of Canada's past.



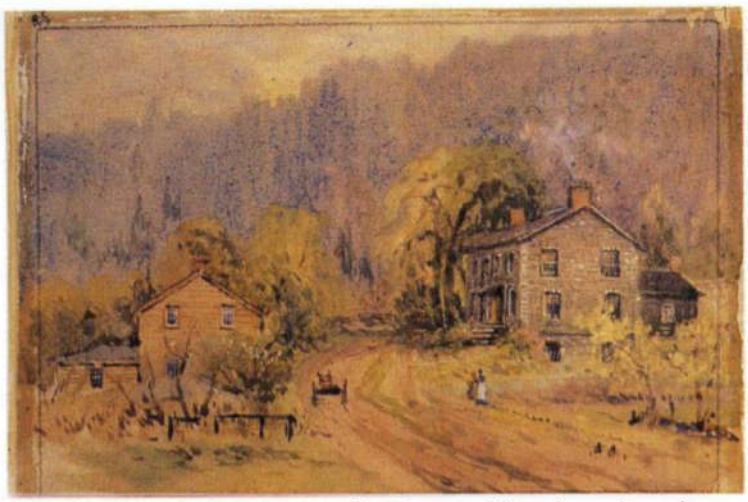
John Ross Robertson Collection

Interior of the homestead of Major Daniel Servos, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Watercolour and gouache over pencil, 1910.

John Ross Robertson Collection

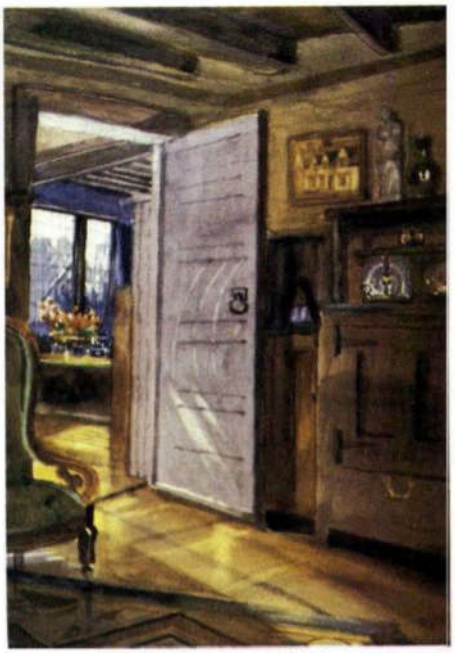
Robertson house, Simcoe Street, east side south of Richmond Street West, Toronto, circa 1885. Watercolour based on an old photograph, attributed to Owen Staples.

Owen Staples, 1910.



John Ross Robertson Collection

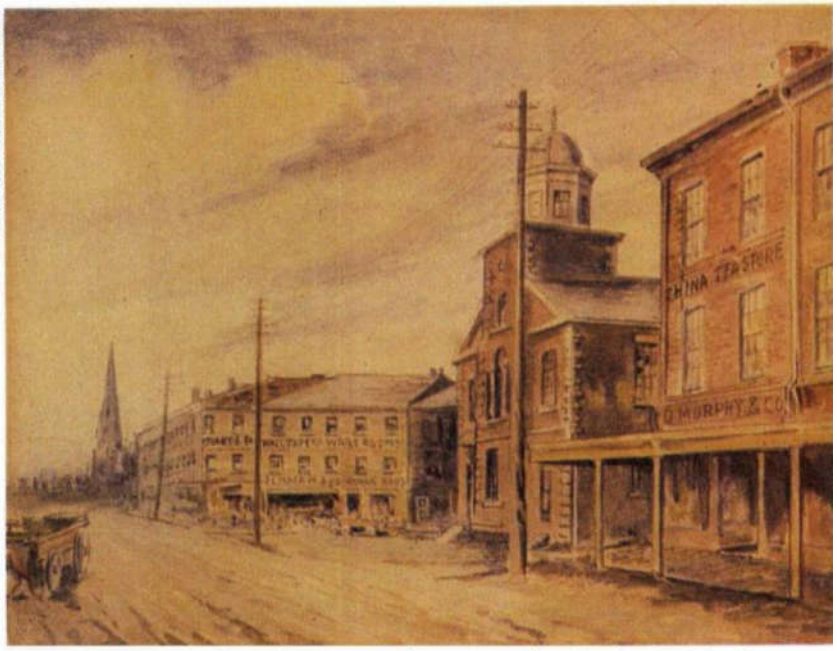
The William Lyon Mackenzie printing office, Queenston. Watercolour and gouache over pencil, attributed to Owen Staples.



The view from the music room to the dining room, Staples house, Toronto, 1938. Watercolour.

Memorial Tower, University of Toronto. Etching.

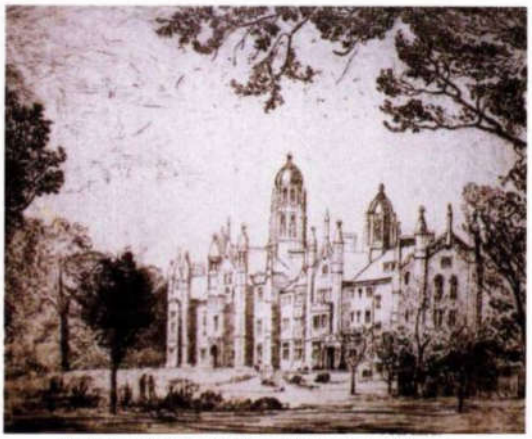
John Ross Robertson Collection



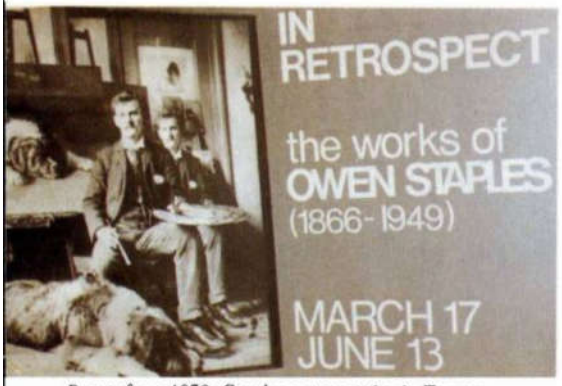
Old city hall, Hamilton, Ontario, watercolour over pencil attributed to Owen Staples.

John Ross Robertson Collection

Yonge Street, Queen to College Streets, east side, looking south from Gould Street, circa 1888. Watercolour attributed to Owen Staples, after an old pen and ink drawing.



Etching of Trinity College, University of Toronto.



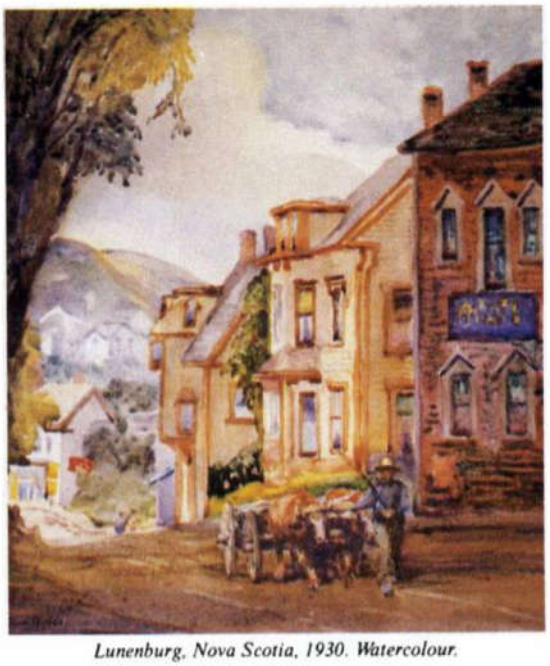
Poster for a 1970s Staples retrospective in Toronto.

A threshing machine at work near Credit Forks, Caledon, Ontario, 1917. Watercolour.

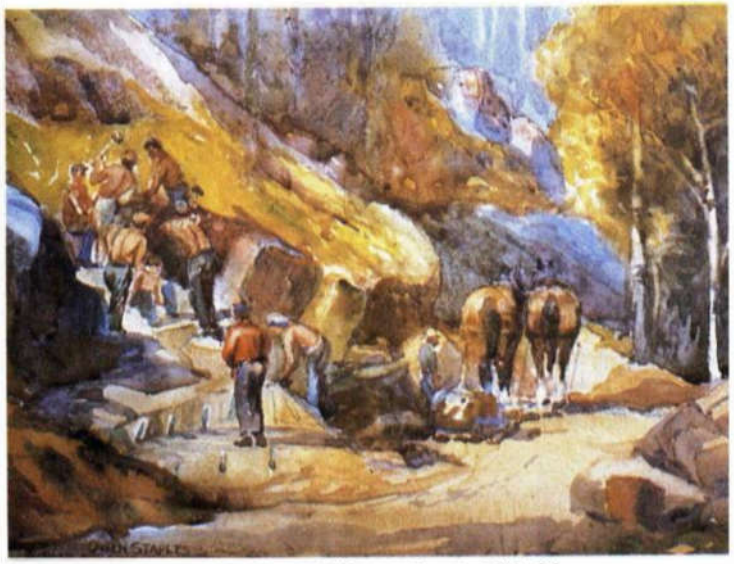
John Ross Robertson Collection

John Ross Robertson Collection

Queenston, Ontario, looking south from the Hamilton estate in 1838. Oil, 1913.



Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, 1930. Watercolour.



Road-building, Haliburton, Ontario, 1913. Oil.

Toronto skyline from Centre Island, 1927. Watercolour.

Sir James Yeo and the 'St. Lawrence'

'A Remarkable Fine Ship'

Sea-dogs at war, 1812-1814

BY BRUCE WISHART

James Lucas Yeo was the sort of Royal Navy officer who embodied the era of Nelson and Trafalgar. He joined the navy before he reached his eleventh birthday and by 1797, not long after his fourteenth birthday, he was a lieutenant.

Yeo quickly proved to be a capable officer of initiative and daring. He was first lieutenant of the 46-gun *Loire* in June 1805 when the ship made an attack on the fortified Spanish port at Muros Bay. A harbour battery garrisoned by 250 men and armed with twelve cannon had the *Loire* under fire. Yeo led a shore party of fifty in a dramatic charge that carried the battery. Among the resulting prizes was the French privateer *Confiance*, of which Yeo was immediately given command.

He was made a post-captain two years later as a result of his part in the evacuation of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil in the face of a French invasion of Portugal. His action at Muros Bay was repeated, on a larger scale, when he led an Anglo-Portuguese force of some 400 men and a few heavy guns against a strongly fortified garrison of 1,200 men with over 200 guns at Cayenne in French Guiana. The resulting expulsion of the French from South America led to James Yeo's becoming the first Protestant awarded a knight commander's cross of the Portuguese order of St. Benedict of Avis. In 1810 he was awarded a British knighthood.

Early in 1811 Yeo was given the 32-gun *Southampton* and ordered to Jamaica. Then, on 19 March 1813, the young captain was given his most important post yet. He was appointed commodore and commander-in-chief of the naval forces on the Canadian Great Lakes.

The War of 1812-1814 was now into its second year. When it began the previous summer there had been few warships on the Great Lakes. On Lake Ontario the British had two small ships, two brigs and two schooners, all in the hands of an ineffectual Provincial Marine. The Americans could summon only the brig *Oneida*, placed on the lake in a largely futile attempt at enforcing the Embargo Act of 1807.

In July 1812 Lieutenant Hugh Earle was easily repulsed in an attack on the American naval base at Sackets Harbor. The lakes were then quiet until October, when the American Government substantially reinforced Sackets Harbor. The new commander, Isaac Chauncey, quickly commandeered six commercial schooners and loaded them with cannon. Then, with the *Oneida* flying his broad pennant, he led his tiny squadron of Sackets for an indecisive attack on the British base at Kingston.

At the close of navigation that fall Chauncey and his Provincial Marine rivals began building up their fleets. The 1813 season opened with an attack on York by the American squadron. The retreating British destroyed one almost-completed warship on the stocks. Another, the *Wolfe*, was launched at Kingston at the beginning of May. Sir James Yeo, who arrived at Kingston the same day, immediately raised his broad pennant from her.

With Yeo's arrival Kingston became the only freshwater dockyard in the history of the Royal Navy. The harbour did, however, have long naval associations. Commercial vessels had been built at Cataraqui since the early days of the French regime, and naval vessels had been on the lake since the mid-eighteenth century. Even the "arms race" now conducted by Yeo and Chauncey might have had its roots as deep as the French-British contest in 1741.

Yeo took up his task with zeal. Within a month he attacked Chauncey's base at Sackets Harbor. The Americans launched the *General Pike* as Yeo roamed the lake in June, and in early August the two squadrons met at Niagara, where Yeo captured two American schooners and saw two more sunk. For a month — a month that saw the British tragedy on Lake Erie — the two small fleets chased each other around Lake Ontario, jockeying for favourable conditions and posi-

Isaac Chauncey: A shipbuilder's war.
(Metropolitan Toronto Library)

Sir James Yeo: Supremacy on the lakes.
(National Archives of Canada)

tions. There were inconclusive clashes on 11 and 28 September. Then, in October, both commanders retired to their respective bases for the close of navigation.

Now the "Shipbuilder's War" assumed new proportions. There was no question of the importance of Lake Ontario; even the Duke of Wellington insisted that naval superiority on the lakes was the key to the defence of Canada. With Erie fallen, and the land routes to the Niagara frontier largely impassable, Lake Ontario was vital as a supply route to the North American interior. Success or failure in this theatre of operations hinged on who could have the strongest squadron with the opening of navigation in the spring of 1814. A single ship could represent a substantial part of one side's total strength; and, as in chess, the game was "lost if the enemy achieved by any means a superiority of a single piece."

Yeo's adversary was Commodore Isaac Chauncey, one of the stars of the young American Navy. Born four years before the revolution, Chauncey was forty-one years old in 1813. By nineteen he had commanded the commercial ship *Jenny*, and in 1799 he was appointed first lieutenant of the naval frigate *President*. For several years he saw steady action, successively commanding the *Chesapeake*, *New York*, and *John Adams*. He was aboard the flagship *Constitution* in the attack on Tripoli. In 1806 he was a captain, the highest statutory rank in the U.S. Navy. The opening of the War of 1812 saw him commanding the New York navy-yard.

These two veteran commanders, Yeo and Chauncey, were well aware of the importance of their task. Yeo had two frigates building at Kingston even before the close of navigation. And these were no lake schooners. At 60 and 44 guns respectively, they were full-size warships, comparable in every way to the ocean-going ships of the Royal Navy.

Yeo was at a disadvantage. Chauncey had relatively easy supply routes and communication; and, because of the number of American ships tied up by the Royal Navy blockade of the East Coast, far better resources all around. For Yeo, the expense of hauling ordnance up the St. Lawrence was exorbitant. The British Commodore felt a chronic shortage of seamen, ship-wrights, and dockyard workmen. Ship timber could no longer be easily procured, as the north shore had been stripped for export before the war began. In addition, the winter of 1813-14 was unusually mild, which further impeded land transportation.

Even so, Yeo made good progress by building the two frigates and converting his two captured schooners to brigs. At Sackets, Chauncey struggled to finish two brigs, two frigates, and the re-rigging of one schooner as a brig.

Seeing that he needed more strength still, Yeo determined to build another ship. Sir Gordon Drummond,

By permission of the Commandant, Royal Military College

The unfinished first-rate ships "Wolfe" and "Canada" can be seen on the stocks in the background in this watercolour of the Headquarters of the Commissioner of the Kingston Dockyard by Vidal.

President and Administrator of Upper Canada, approved of the plan, and Captain Richard O'Conor of the Kingston dockyard thought that "with exertion a small class frigate may be constructed by July ensuing." A call went out for more timber and supplies.

But by the beginning of February Yeo had reliable intelligence that the Americans were building three new ships — one 154 feet long, a brig and a large schooner — and had seventeen sail already afloat. He wrote to Sir George Prevost, governor-in-chief and commander of the British forces in North America, proposing to build a frigate 150 feet long on the gun deck and 44 feet in extreme breadth, which he thought "may be ready by July." Yeo and Prevost shared the opinion that the 1814 campaign depended upon the number of vessels they could build that winter. Authorized to begin construction, the Commodore immediately called for still more men and supplies, though his demands were already being felt by Admiral Griffith on the Halifax Station.

On March 24, to his absolute horror, Commodore Isaac Chauncey learned that Sir James Yeo had laid the keel of a three-decked ship designed to carry 100 guns — a full-scale ship-of-the-line. The escalating arms race on Lake Ontario seemed to have gotten very much out of hand.

By mid-April, however, Yeo and Prevost received the unsettling news that, instead of authorizing the construction of more ships at Kingston, the British Admiralty had decided to send out what we would now call "prefab" ships. Two 32-gun frigates, dismantled, were already on their way. Yeo was not unduly alarmed, for his new ship was already begun, and must of course be completed. As he told Prevost, "the strength of the third ship, now building, is such as to give us a reasonable hope that [the new frigate] being sent up is unnecessary."

On 14 April Yeo launched the frigates he had begun in the fall. Although Chauncey had launched two brigs in early April, the American Commodore felt unequal to Yeo's squadron and thus stayed in Sackets when Yeo attacked Oswego at the beginning of May. After seizing considerable stores there, Yeo blockaded Chauncey at Sackets until Chauncey's next ship was ready. Then Yeo returned to Kingston. As he wrote to Sir Gordon Drummond, their "large ship" would soon be ready

— "what object have we for risking an action with our present force when we will so soon have the superiority?" Besides, as all of the participants were soon aware, Napoleon had abdicated in April, and the Canadas would no longer be the Empire's "second best." Instead of risking conflict with a slightly stronger American squadron, better to stay, as Prevost put it, "cautiously on the *defensive* . . . until the moment arrives, when by the addition of the large Ship now on the Stocks, you may bring the naval contest on this Lake fairly to an issue." So, by the beginning of July, Yeo was being blockaded in his turn at Kingston as he awaited the completion of his big ship.

This leviathan was, however, posing considerable problems. Although he was receiving continual reinforcements, Yeo was critically short of seamen. He estimated on 5 June that he would need 640 men to operate the new ship. He plagued Griffith at Halifax, who, though able to provide some assistance, commented brusquely that since Yeo had no doubt told the Admiralty about his new ship, the Admiralty would no doubt supply a crew. Yeo was unconvinced. In addition, he was still desperate for timber as well as skilled and unskilled workmen.

On 22 July Yeo placed the revised dimensions of his new ship before Prevost: "In consequence of the Enemy

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Here are more Guns for the Lake service. If ever they do but get there. I have the last you sent were waylaid by a sly Yankey Fox and the ship being a Stranger he has taken her in—
I tell you what Master Bull. You had better keep both your Ships and Guns at home. If you send all you've got to the Lakes, it will only make fun for the Yankeys to take them.
Patent Oven for Baking Ships
French Dough Trough
Entered according to act of Congress
JOHN BULL making a new BATCH of SHIPS to send to the LAKES

Above: Yeo's "St. Lawrence" in a dramatic, if slightly inaccurate, watercolour by C.H.J. Snider, 1913. Below: John Bull and baker George III make a new batch of ships to send to the Great Lakes in this cartoon by William Charles, 1814.

Metropolitan Toronto Library

View of the Kingston and Royal Navy Dockyard from Fort Henry in 1828. The warships are housed over, allegedly for perpetual readiness, though in fact they were so rotten that they could never serve again.

having Built a Ship at Sackets Harbour, carrying long 24 Pounder Guns, and laid down the Keel, of a Brig 80 feet in length, I have the Honour to propose to your Excellency of Building a Ship agreeably to the enclosed Dimensions . . . Length on the Gun Deck — 160 feet; Tread of the Keel on the Ground — 148 feet; Beam Moulded — 42 feet; Depth under the Gun Deck on the Limber Strakes — 13 feet; Draught of Water with Stores on board — 14 feet."

That was a far cry from the "small class frigate" O'Conor had mentioned in February!

But if the new ship promised to be the saviour of Upper Canada, it was now taking its toll. It swallowed up most of the supplies coming over the laborious St. Lawrence route. It absorbed the energies of Yeo and his Royal Navy dockyard, and precluded any hope of the British squadron taking the lake.

Sir Gordon Drummond commanded the forces on the Niagara frontier. On 5 July the Battle of Chippawa took place. On the 25th at Lundy's Lane there occurred as horrible a bloodbath as any in the annals of warfare. Even without these, the drains on Drummond's resources, just maintaining his Right Division, were exhausting. After all, his principal supply route was Lake Ontario, and it currently belonged to Chauncey. As early as April, Drummond had been "apprehensive" about his army's supplies. His concern grew through July, though it somewhat relieved when Yeo sent two brigs to run the American blockade, and by August he was desperate: "All, therefore, that can be done by your forces is to hasten the equipment of the new ship, and, the moment the squadron can sail, to push up to this point with every article of provisions and stores which the Department of the Army at Kingston may apply to you to receive."

Commodore Chauncey, meanwhile, was also at odds with his army. After long delays in leaving Sackets after Yeo abandoned the blockade, Chauncey managed to offer a little help in supplying the American Army; though all the while keeping a nervous eye on Kingston lest Yeo dash across and take Sackets. His caution drew the criticism of the army commanders.

So, for the duration of the summer, there was little naval action. Chauncey managed to cow the crew of the British *Magnet* into firing their own ship, and in a brilliant small boat action on Lake Erie, Captain Dobbs of the Royal Navy captured two American schooners. Otherwise, though, the entire conflict was focused on the ship-building at Kingston.

The warship was taking shape now. Instead of following the accepted Royal Navy practice of building the hull with raised fore and after decks, Yeo settled on a flat deck, level from bow to stern. This was apparently a Dutch custom, stronger, and allowing for more stern guns, which Yeo may have seen at Copenhagen in 1801. That he was able to recognize its advantages and break away from Royal Navy convention to incorporate it in his new ship speaks volumes for his

originality and initiative.

The new ship was to have been completed by July. This was of course advanced when its size was enlarged. In June Chauncey reported: "This ship is progressing rapidly and the enemy calculates to launch her the first of August and fit her out immediately. My own impression is, however, that she cannot be got ready for service before October."

The first of August came and went, leaving both sides in suspense. The entire campaign hinged on this one ship. As the British Commissary-General, W.H. Robinson, succinctly put it, the new ship "will acquire naval superiority on Lake Ontario. If not the Right Division on Niagara cannot be supported." Conversely, the American General George McClure maintained that "should Chauncey continue to ride triumphant on the lake we would have but little fear on our frontier."

But when would the ship be ready? At the end of August Prevost wrote to Lord Bathurst that "the vacillatory communications I have received from Sir James Yeo put it out of my power to state to Your Lordship exactly when the first-rate ship building at Kingston will be launched," but he did not feel that it would be before mid-September. "In consequence all hopes of seeing our squadron on Lake Ontario before the first week in October have vanished." On 3 September O'Conor wrote that the ship "will be launched on the 8th inst. if nothing unfavorable occurs to prevent it."

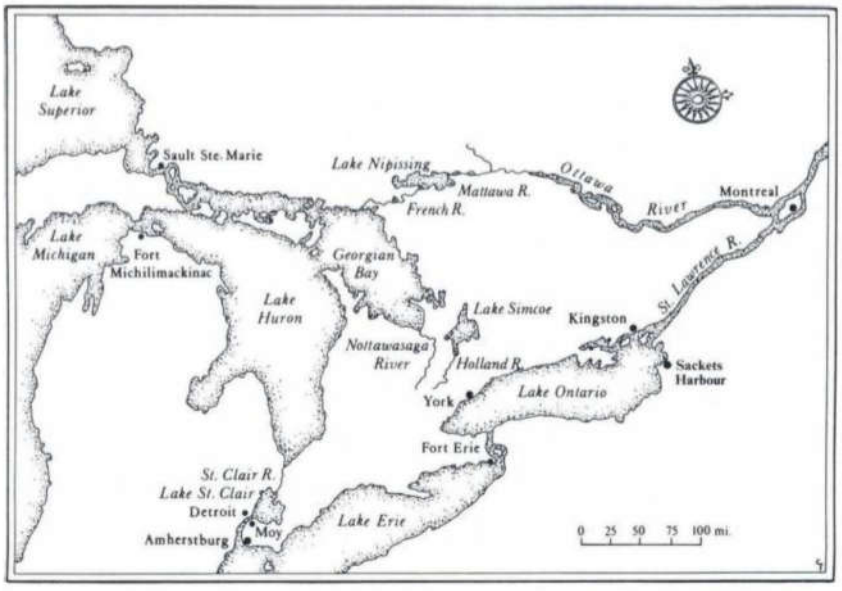
Meanwhile Chauncey hovered outside the harbour, anxious for the slightest news. Major-General Brown, commanding the American Army, railed at him for not supporting the army while he had command of the lake. The British Right Division spirited in supplies on a brig and two schooners working at the head of the lake while Chauncey clung to Kingston. Both sides were licking their wounds from Lundy's Lane. There had been British reverses at Fort Erie. Washington had been sacked, but there was a humiliating defeat at Plattsburg on Lake Champlain, where the ineffectual Prevost and his army had watched in horror as a small, redoubtable Royal Navy squadron was pounded to pieces.

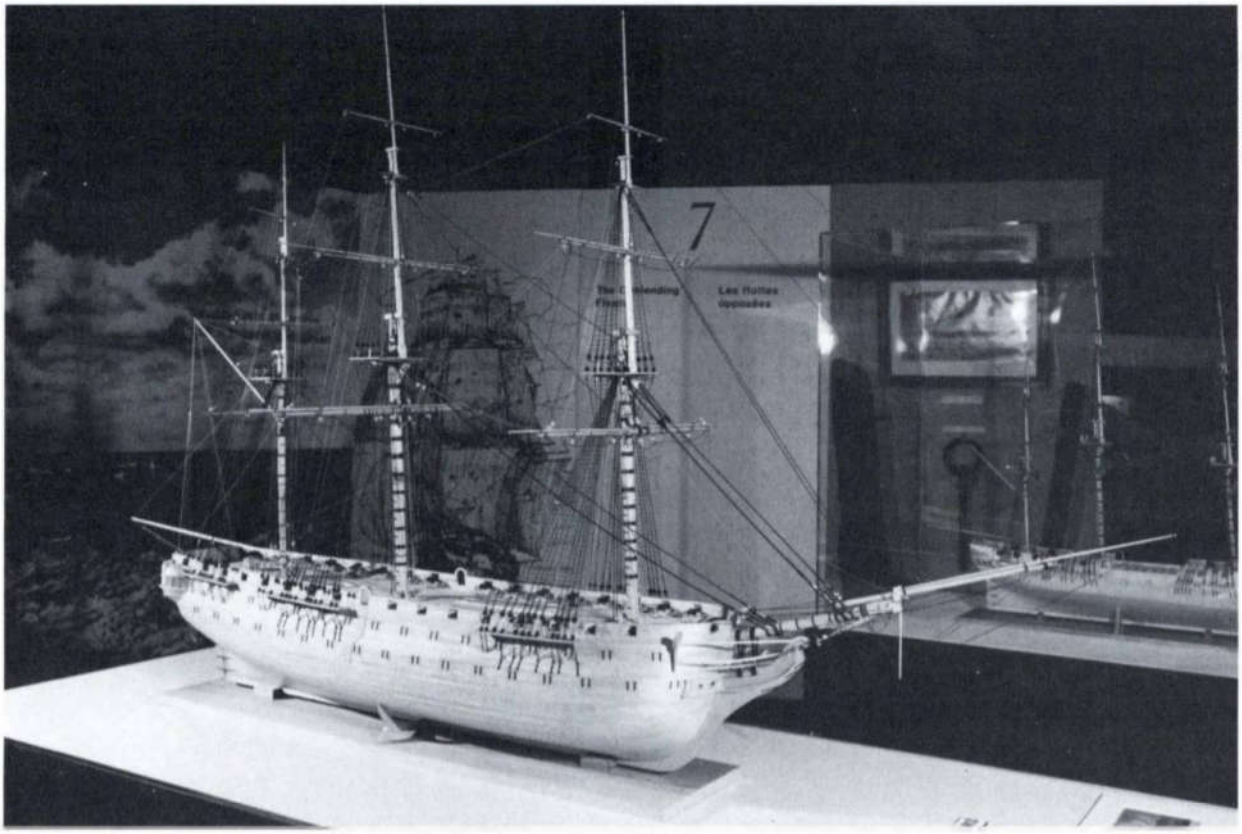
Into this charged atmosphere, on 10 September, came H.M.S. *St. Lawrence*. Cannons roared in salute from the batteries of Point Frederick, as if ensuring the attention of the agitated American Commodore. Squealing and complaining, the massive hulk slid down the ways and stern first into Navy Bay. Her hull, uncharacteristically, was the muddy green colour of paint stocks requisitioned from a local yard. Her topsides were shining black with yellow ochre bands. There were flagpoles where the masts would soon be stepped, flags flying from each one. The Union Jack fluttered in the bows, and the red ensign at the stern.

She was, of course, a long way from being ready for battle. She had no masts, sails, rigging or guns, and she lacked literally hundreds of fittings, but her very appearance was enough to further unsettle Chauncey. "She had been only four months on the Stocks," Yeo crowed, "and is a remarkable fine ship."

In fact, the *St. Lawrence* was one of the world's largest warships; larger even than Nelson's *Victory*. She had grown to a full length of 194 feet, and 52 feet at the beam. Her armament came to 112 guns: 27 long 32-pounders, 41 long 24-pounders, three 68-pounder carronades, and 41 snub-nosed 32-pounder carronades. She needed 837 officers and seamen to man her. This, truly, was a mighty fighting ship.

Enough to worry Chauncey. He grudgingly transported General Izard and his army from Sackets to the Genesee River, then dashed back to Kingston, anx-





Canadian War Museum

Model of the "St. Lawrence" in the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

ious of what Yeo might do if let out of his sight. Yeo armed the ship with growing confidence, speculating to Prevost — hoping, but surely not believing, that Chauncey would stay on the lake and engage him.

At Niagara, Drummond was desperate for relief. Major General Kempt at Kingston, however, reported on 20 September that *St. Lawrence* would not be ready for service before 7 October, and thus could hardly reach the Right Division until the 20th. Drummond was stunned. He had assumed that the fleet would immediately rush to his relief, and expected a strong American attack at any moment.

Far from planning a major offensive on the Niagara frontier, however, the American forces were anxiously eyeing Chauncey. The American Commodore, it seemed, could at any moment turn and flee for Sackets, abandoning all but his dockyard and precious ships. So far, the blockade was still effectual; on 28 September he prevented two British ships from running the blockade with supplies for Drummond, but it was a near thing. When he saw the two ships coming out of the harbour on a fair wind, Chauncey panicked and struggled to make sail and flee (which was evidently Yeo's intention). It was only when the British hove to at Chauncey's appearance that the American Commodore realized that Yeo was not bringing out his battleship. Chauncey sent *Lady of the Lake* in close to the harbour to watch Yeo's squadron and signal any movements. On 29 September her commander reported that *St. Lawrence* was hauled out in the stream and completely rigged, but her sails were not yet bent.

On 5 October Prevost learned that *St. Lawrence* would certainly be ready by the 15th, and decided to proceed to Kingston to supervise the remainder of the 1814 campaign. Chauncey was gone before the governor's arrival. On 5 October the *Sylph* crept in and saw "the enemy's large ship with sails bent, topgallant yards across and to all appearance perfectly ready for sea." The following day the American Commodore turned sail and fled, fully convinced that Yeo would fall upon Sackets Harbor within ten days. "This defeats all the objects of operations by land in this quarter," Izard moaned. Chauncey and the commandant of the garrison at Sackets called in the militia, which, with the troops that Izard had left for their protection, gave them a force of six thousand of all ranks and arms.

Drummond was becoming daily more frantic. On the 10th he wrote that he expected an attack, with the Americans using their Lake Erie squadron for troop transport. Yeo, amazingly, still professed to believe that Chauncey might pounce on his squadron were it fully

burdened with supplies for the Right Division. A reconnaissance of Sackets had indicated that Chauncey was firmly ensconced under the guns of the batteries there, but a new problem had arisen. Already, with an incomplete load, *St. Lawrence* drew twenty-one feet of water. Loaded to her limit, she would be lowered two feet more and unable to use the harbours of Lake Ontario. Yeo therefore refused to take on any more supplies. Hearing this news, Drummond retorted angrily that should "the requisite supply of provisions and stores not come up in the squadron, and should any disaster happen to this division, (in consequence) and, above all, should Commodore Chauncey, (as is probable) decline an action, His Majesty's naval commander will, in my opinion, have much to answer for."

Finally, on 14 October, Yeo's squadron stood away from Kingston. Captain Frederick Hickey, who had arrived in June with reinforcements of seamen and dockyard workers, was in command; but the *St. Lawrence* flew Yeo's broad pennant, and the Commodore was aboard. Amazingly, Yeo still claimed to be uncertain of whether or not Chauncey would engage him.

The squadron set out for Niagara with a large consignment of supplies (including 4,000 loaves of bread aboard the *St. Lawrence*). Yeo assured Prevost "that he would return as soon as possible with as many of the sick and disabled of the Right Division as were in a situation to be removed, and convey another and much more ample supply of provisions, stores, and men, previous to the closing of navigation."

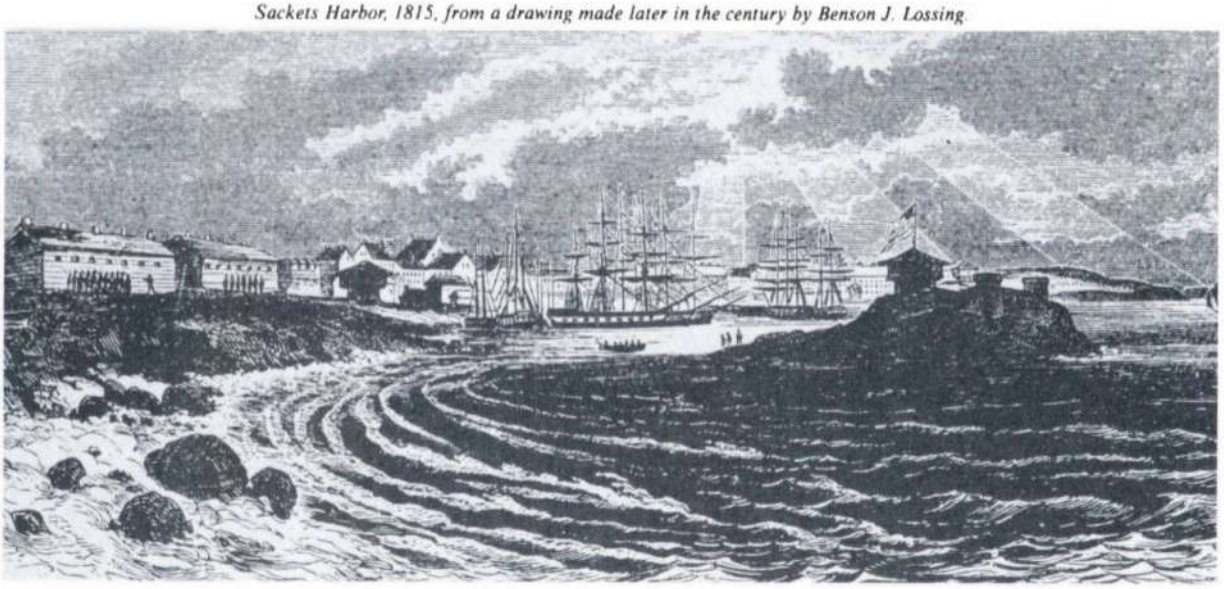
The *St. Lawrence* performed well, even though she had to beat her way to the head of the lake against strong headwinds. Lightning shattered her maintopgallantmast, but Yeo was undaunted. "I believe the *St. Lawrence* has completely gained the Naval ascendency on this Lake," he gloated, "and I am happy to say, she sails very superior to anything on it." One sight was enough for the American army. Presumably sighting Yeo's squadron off the Genesee, Brown ordered a full retreat. By 5 November, they were gone from Upper Canada, mining Fort Erie as they went.

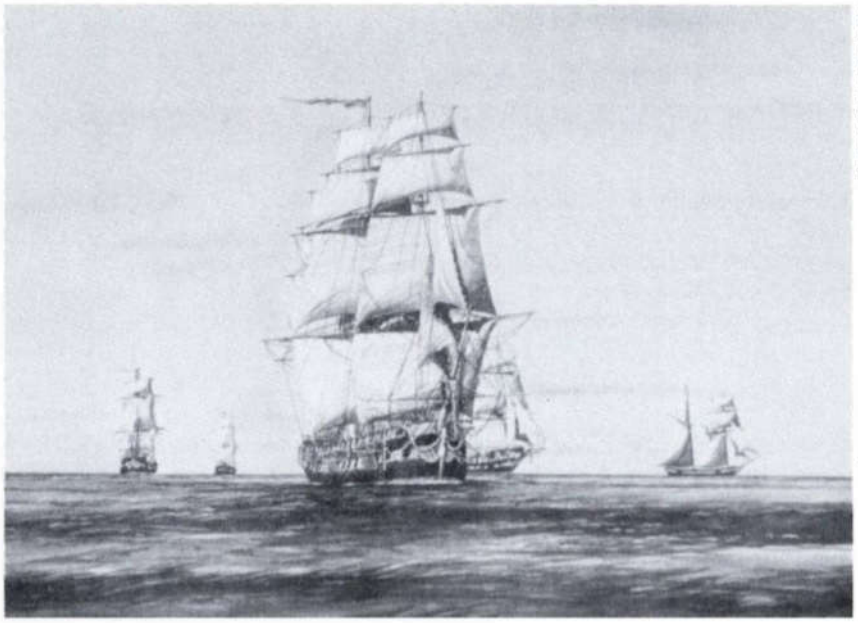
Chauncey had not entirely given up, however. Late in April Yeo had made an unsuccessful bid to mine the ships in Sackets by sending in a small boat force under the cover of darkness. This seems to have given Chauncey the idea for a similar action. After his fleet had returned to Sackets, he sent a Midshipman McGowan on an attempt to slip a small boat into Navy Bay to mine the *St. Lawrence*. The assault was uncovered by two British boats, but McGowan captured them and proceeded with his plan — only to discover that *St. Lawrence* had already sailed for Niagara.

Yeo, meanwhile, arrived off Niagara on 18 October though rough weather prevented his landing troops or supplies for three days. Drummond, still fearing imminent attack, requested the loan of some of Yeo's marines for his immediate defensive needs; Yeo, apparently still apprehensive of Chauncey, refused. On 22 October he sailed with wounded of the Right Division, and on the 24th anchored off Kingston.

He was met by a boat carrying Prevost's Adjutant General, with an urgent request for Yeo to immediately carry some 1,600 troops with ordnance to Drummond's relief. Yeo replied that he could take no more than 1,000 men, though he eventually carried more than 1,200, with a good supply of stores and ordnance, when he sailed on 30 October. Arriving off Niagara on 2

Sackets Harbor, 1815, from a drawing made later in the century by Benson J. Lossing





Canada Steamship Lines

HMS "Prince Regent" and part of Sir James Yeo's fleet in Lake Ontario, 1814, from a watercolour by George A. Cuthbertson.

November, he hastily disembarked the troops, then sailed for York, presumably to transfer the ordnance to lighter vessels for easier landing.

Drummond, who had hastened to Niagara to meet Yeo and to suggest a combined attack on the right bank of the river, was perplexed by Yeo's disappearance, and immediately set out for Niagara. Yeo refused to co-operate in the assault, but before this went any further, intelligence reported a very large force assembled at Sackets. This was of course the force assembled to repulse any attack by Yeo, but, to the agitated army planners, an "important offensive" seemed to be contemplated. Yeo and Drummond sailed immediately, and anchored off Kingston on 10 November, finding, of course, that the rumour was groundless.

Drummond was anxious to immediately take the fleet back to Niagara, particularly after learning that an American force had broken through and destroyed many of the resources he had depended on to sustain his army over the winter. Yeo, however, consulting his pilots, felt it too close to the end of navigation to risk taking his ships back out on to the lake. There was far too much resting on these irreplaceable warships to have them wrecked on the lee shore of Lake Ontario! The squadron was, accordingly, laid up for the winter.

One of the pilots, John Richardson, later commented on the flotilla of warships that had accompanied *St. Lawrence*, saying that "war had now been so long carried out in the country as a matter of course, and on so extensive a scale of preparation, that these latter were scarcely regarded as anything extraordinary, even on the small and inland fresh water sea of Lake Ontario."

In fact, the "scale of preparation" was still escalating. One of the two frigates sent from England was assembled as the *Psyche* and launched on Christmas Day. By that time Chauncey had received clearance from the Secretary of the Navy to build two ships-of-the-line at Sackets. Yeo soon learned of this, and laid the keels for two more 120-gun battleships, to be called *Wolfe* and *Canada*. As one contemporary British historian caustically remarked, it was fortunate that "before the lakes were open in the ensuing spring, peace came, otherwise, there is no saying whether the building mania would not have continued, while room remained on the lake for working the ships."

Prevost was officially informed of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, on 1 March. An elegant ball was held aboard *St. Lawrence* on 4 March. On 11 April at Kingston, the Royal Navy entertained Chauncey aboard the warship, honouring him with a 13-gun salute. Yeo stopped at Sackets on his way back to England, commenting in admiration: "Such are their facilities that . . . they are more than half finished two ships of 120 guns each in thirty days."

On 30 May, Yeo made his final assessment of his late position: "The preservation of Canada by means of a naval force on the lakes will, in my opinion, be an endless, if not futile undertaking." Any British successes were to a large part due to the "stupidity" of the Americans, an error Yeo did not think would be repeated.

Six days after he made this report Yeo was made commander-in-chief on the west coast of Africa, with a special responsibility for the anti-slavery patrol, and

was to hoist his broad pennant over the *Inconstant*. He died from fever on board the *Semiramis* in 1817.

Chauncey went on to further conspicuous service of his country. If he was disappointed that he had been unable to take out his new battleship, *New Orleans*, it was not for long. In the summer of 1815 he was given *Washington*, one of the first ships of the line in the U.S. Navy, and commanded the Mediterranean squadron in 1816-18. Before his death in 1840 he was alternately a member of the Board of Navy Commissioners, and again commandant of the New York navy-yard.

Their lake warships were laid up in ordinary, made obsolete by the Rush-Bagot Agreement. The American vessels fell to pieces at Sackets Harbor. At Kingston, at least some attempt was made to hold the British vessels in reserve. In 1818 Robert Barrie, who had begun his Royal Navy career as a midshipman under George Vancouver, took charge of the dockyard. The ships were housed over, and their gear put into a warehouse ashore; one 1826 traveller commented that the yard was so well ordered that the squadron could put to sea in a month. But they slowly rotted away, due to neglect and to the haste with which they had been built.

Finally, in economic reforms following a Whig victory in the English Parliament in 1830, Barrie was ordered to dispose of the four largest vessels. They were auctioned in January, 1832, with due sentimental notice from the local press. The standing and running rigging brought £1,400, but only one ship was sold. Robert Drummond, a Kingston shipowner, contractor and brewer, bid £25 for the hulk of the mighty *St. Lawrence*.

The new owner of "this cidevant pride of the Canadian lakes . . . dismantled her to the edge of the water, leaving her prodigious hulk the only remnant of her former majesty so firmly bedded in the bottom of the waters, as to render every prospect of its removal hopeless and impracticable." Drummond's contract, however, made it clear that he was responsible for its complete removal, so he was obliged to make another attempt early the following winter. Having just obtained the *Rideau*, one of the dozen or so steamers on the lake, he attached her machinery to pumps. After an eventful four days' labour, closely assisted by Barrie and his officers, he was able to float the aged hull.

Drummond hoped to use "this immense uncouth Ark" as a wharf for his brewery. The *Rideau* accordingly hooked onto the hulk and towed it around Point Frederick. But she grounded some two hundred feet away from her destination, as if unable to face this final indignity. Drummond gave up in disgust. Two nights later, however, a heavy gale sprang up and miraculously placed the hulk in exactly the right position.

Metropolitan Toronto Public Library

Sir George Prevost, Governor of Canada.

There she became a cordwood dock, storing fuel for Drummond's steamers. A wharf was extended out to her and holes were pierced in her sides so that sleighloads of wood could be hauled directly aboard. Finally, weakened by misuse and decay, smashed by gales off the lake, the great *St. Lawrence* disappeared beneath the waves.

She was not lost for long. During the early years of the twentieth century newspaperman C.H.J. Snider was collecting stories about her career, and as early as 1916 he grappled some white oak from the wreck. When the water level dropped in the early 1930s he was able to wade out to her. "An extent of a hundred feet of the wreckage was exposed to the eye," he wrote. "One end disappeared into a reef of broken limestone which had been thrown over it by the waves and more broken stone and waterlogged debris filled the visible part of the remains, vanishing in deeper water towards the west. I saw the upper face of the keelson, and great many straight timbers, floor-frames or lower futtocks apparently and a large quantity of planking and waling, for sides and ceiling and deck, all broken and in disorder."

Snider and his assistants salvaged timber, coins, tokens and metalwork from the wreck. Local craftsmen made souvenirs with recovered wood. A swivel gun, with mount still attached, had been salvaged in 1920, and one local resident had an axe which he

claimed had been used at the ship's launching. The bell in Kingston's St. Andrew's Church was made with copper salvaged from the *St. Lawrence*. In 1938 Ronald Way, director of the recently-restored Fort Henry, sponsored dives on the wreck. Although higher water and construction obliterated part of the site in the 1940s, oak and teak were still being raised in the late 1950s — one Canadian historian is said to have a stool made with oak from the wreck.

But despite the recovery of these many relics, the site has never been properly surveyed. Although it is within the reach of shore-based construction and sport divers, the amazing preservation of contemporary wrecks in Lake Ontario makes it possible that the site may yet provide worthwhile study. Preserve Our Wrecks Kingston (POW) is at last launching a detailed examination of the site.

These, and other discoveries on the floor of Lake Ontario, are shedding new light on the Shipbuilder's War, drawing renewed attention to it. Again the question is asked — was the arms race, and ultimately the construction of the battleship *St. Lawrence*, justified?

James Yeo chose a course of action and followed it resolutely. He needed a strong squadron that could hold open the vital supply route of Lake Ontario; he saw the building of *St. Lawrence* as a way of achieving an overwhelming superiority at one stroke. If anything, he was guilty of expecting Chauncey to act more firmly than he did. But then, this may have been largely posturing on Yeo's part — by exaggerating the likelihood of a fleet action, Yeo may have been reinforcing his justification for the strength to which he had built his squadron.

Perhaps he was, like Chauncey, a little too cavalier towards the needs of his army — hardly unusual for a naval commander. He was particularly out of patience with Prevost, whom he saw as responsible for the Lake Champlain fiasco. Perhaps Yeo was just anxious to avoid the fate of those unfortunate commanders, Downie and Barclay, on Lakes Champlain and Erie, who had been forced into premature action by army commanders and thus annihilated.

This was the last lake on which the British had a real naval presence. It was a crucial supply route. Yeo's first duty was the safety of that supply route. The use of it, for the transport constantly urged by the army commanders, came second.

That the Admiralty endorsed Yeo's position is amply demonstrated by the favourable appointment he was given after the Treaty of Ghent, when so many naval officers were finding themselves thrown ashore on half-pay. Yeo's defence of Lake Ontario, essential for the defence of the country, certainly places him among the few Canadian heroes of the War of 1812. ♦

Bruce Wishart lives in Brandon, Manitoba. His most recent article in "The Beaver" was "Paddle Wheels on the Prairies" (December 1989/January 1990).

Superiority on the Lakes

I have already told you and Lord Bathurst that I feel no objection to going to America, though I don't promise to myself much success there. I believe there are troops enough there for the defence of Canada forever, and even for the accomplishment of any reasonable offensive plan that could be formed from the Canadian frontier. I am quite sure that all the American armies of which I have ever read would not beat out of a field of battle the troops that went from Bordeaux last summer, if common precautions and care were taken of them. That which appears to be wanting in America is not a General, or General Officers and troops, but a naval superiority on the Lakes. Till that superiority is acquired, it is impossible, according to my notion, to maintain an army in such a situation as to keep the enemy out of the whole frontier, much less to make any conquest from the enemy, which with those superior means, might, with reasonable hopes of success, be undertaken. I may be wrong in this opinion, but I think the whole history of the war proves its truth.

Wellington depicted as "Head of the Army"

—The Duke of Wellington to Lord Liverpool, the British Prime Minister, 1814.

HIGH LIFE AND LOW LIFE IN EDWARDIAN MONTREAL

By George E. McElroy

During the first decade of this century, my father, the late George E. McElroy senior, was a cartoonist and staff artist for the *Montreal Star* and other newspapers. He began his newspaper career in the United States following his return from the Boer War in South Africa where he served with the Lord Strathcona Horse. Before that, he had been a North West Mounted Policeman. In the United States, he worked for the *St. Paul Globe*, the *St. Louis Post Despatch* and the *Detroit Free Press*. He then moved to Montreal where, after six years with the *Montreal Star*, he worked for the *Daily Witness*, the *Montreal Herald* and the two leading French language dailies, *La Presse* and *La Patrie*.

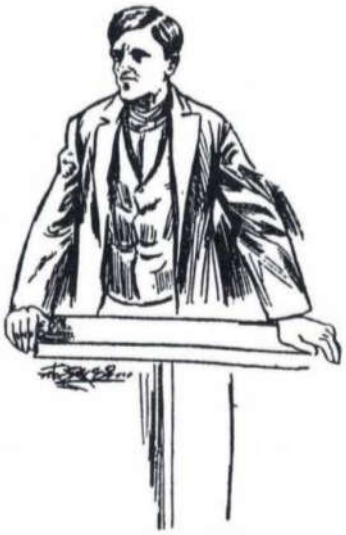
In 1908 he began keeping a scrapbook of clippings showing his art work. These octogenarian scraps of newsprint are now faded and disintegrating, but I recently managed to photo-copy most of them. The result is a revealing pictorial record of Montreal life during the Edwardian era.

Newspaper artists of that period enjoyed a high degree of admiration and respect. It was a glamorous profession comparable in public esteem to that conferred on present-day television hosts. Staff artists dressed in the height of fashion, travelled first class wherever they went, tipped lavishly and patronized the most fashionable and expensive restaurants, saloons and hotels. Their work brought them into daily contact with the city's leading businessmen, politicians, sportsmen, socialites, theatrical performers and other notables. Despite all material benefits and attractions, the job was extraordinarily demanding. They had to be capable of drawing cartoons and caricatures to order, capturing the likenesses of newsworthy personalities and illustrating any fast-breaking news event from a three-alarm fire to a train wreck. And it wasn't enough just to be able to draw well. There were deadlines to be met and editors of that day were notoriously irrascible, impatient and disinclined to accept excuses for tardiness.

The artists worked long, irregular hours. It was by no means unusual for my father to be assigned to cover

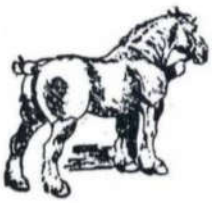
TWO THOUSAND TROOPS ATTEND THE MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR THE KING.

Montreal mourns King Edward VII, 1909.



In court to-day charged with pocket-picking.

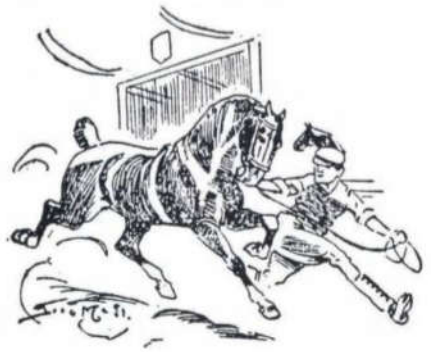
Principal Peterson of McGill "capping a lady graduate".



The St. Andrews Ball, Windsor Hotel, Montreal 1909.

some evening affair such as a dinner, reception or ball where it might take him until well past midnight to make his preliminary pencil sketches. He would then return to his lodgings to complete the work in pen-and-ink. When these drawings were finished and handed in to the city desk, he would then be free to have breakfast and catch a few hours sleep before the next assignment.

In 1908 the cost of living seems to have been astonishingly reasonable in comparison to today's prices. Rooms for rent, with electric light, hot and cold water and the use of a telephone, were advertised for eight and ten dollars a month while a room in the suburb of Verdun was listed for two dollars a month. A typical better class restaurant menu listed half a dozen oysters on the half shell for 30¢. The charge for half a broiled lobster was 45¢ and fillets of white fish Genevais 25¢.



Scotch Broth and Cockie Leekie soups were 10¢ per bowl and oyster stew was 30¢. Roast ribs of beef with horse radish was 25¢ per serving while roast loin of lamb with mint sauce was 45¢. A Sirloin steak cost 35¢. No one worried about cholesterol and a glass of half cream and half milk cost 15¢.

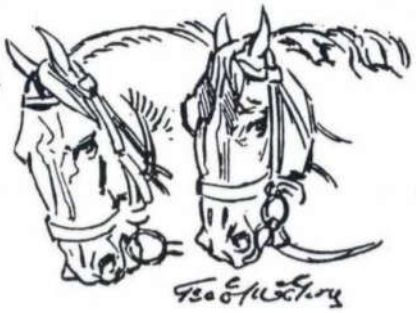
But even such bargains as these were surpassed by the free lunches served in most saloons where a schooner of beer cost 5¢. In some of these establishments, white-jacketed waiters would serve patrons by carving rare, medium or well-done slices of beef to order from large roasts. The fare offered also included turkey, ham and a variety of cold meats. In the most sumptuous of these hostelries it was the rule that only gentlemen, recognizable as such by their attire, were welcome. All others were given the "bums' rush".

Montreal then was a city of extreme social and economic contrasts. While the rich and privileged enjoyed an apparently Utopian existence, the poor had to struggle desperately in order to survive. A special Christmas layout in the *Montreal Star* of 12 December 1908, is headed, "Two Christmases" and includes a vignette of a shabbily-dressed woman at an outdoor market with a small child clinging to her skirts. Her careworn expression and empty basket suggest she has no money for Christmas fare. Another vignette shows two fashionably dressed ladies with fur wraps and muffs on the street of a much better neighbourhood. Their two children are warmly-clad and happy-looking. The boy is holding a pair of skis, probably new, and the girl, a toy shovel. A sleigh, drawn by a pair of smart-looking carriage horses stands waiting at the curbside. Yet another vignette shows a typical Montreal newsboy. His coat collar is turned up against the cold and he is puffing on a cigarette. When my father drew this picture, quite likely he was thinking of the cold winter evening he had discovered just such a newsboy huddled asleep in a doorway. Shaking the boy awake, he said, "Come on, Laddie, you can't sleep here! You'll catch your death of pneumonia. Why don't you go home?"

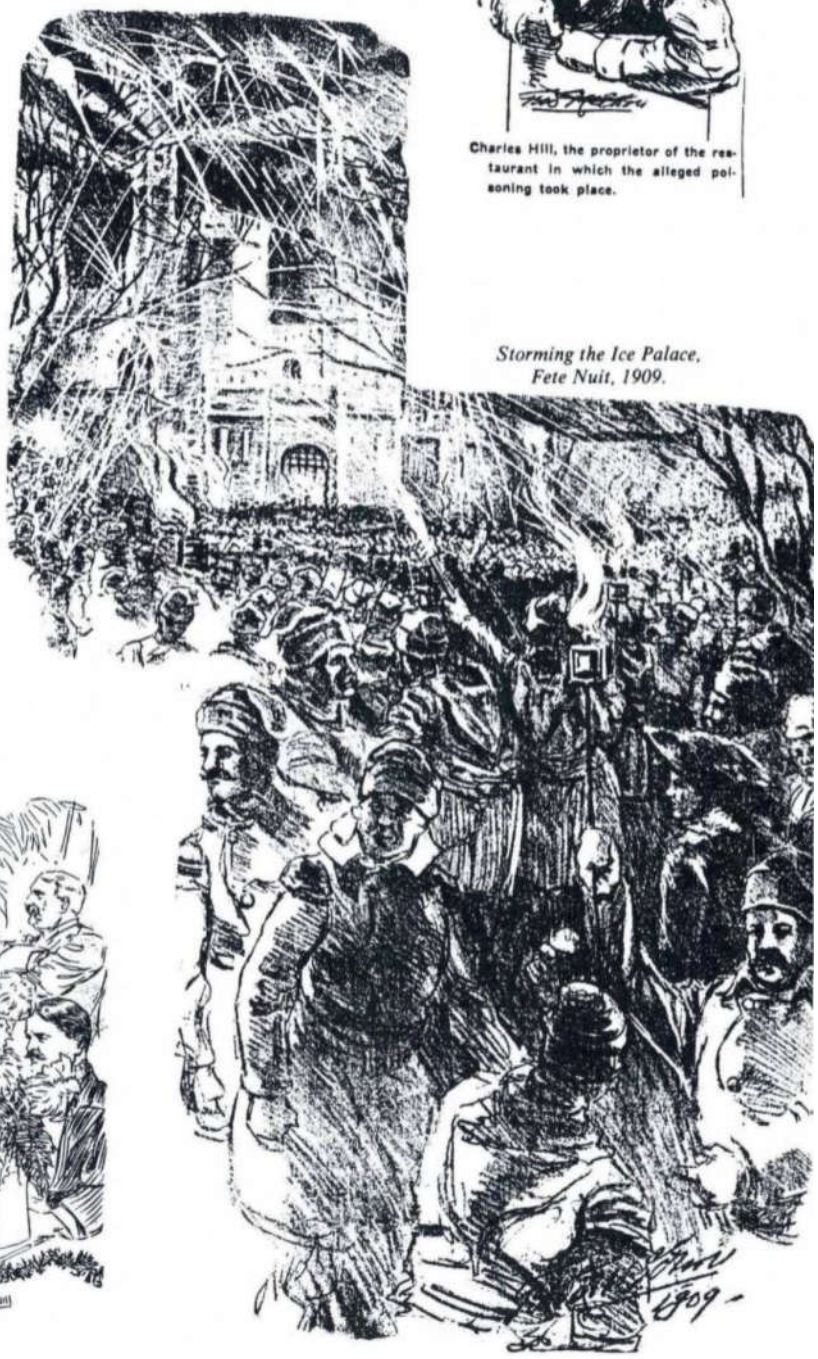
"I can't go home until I sell all my papers!" was the plaintive reply.

"Come along with me then," ordered my father. "I'll soon sell your papers for you!"

He proceeded to carry out his promise by leading the bewildered urchin into one of Montreal's most fashionable and expensive restaurants, which happened to be nearby. There, from the centre of the dance floor, he made a short, emotion-packed plea to the astonished diners, describing in graphic detail the circumstances surrounding his discovery of the boy and of his promise to sell the newspapers. In conclusion, he said, "Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm counting on your kind-heartedness and generosity. How much are you prepared to offer for each of these papers?"



Charles Hill, the proprietor of the restaurant in which the alleged poisoning took place.



Storming the Ice Palace, Fete Nuit, 1909.

THE CANADIAN CLUB'S BANQUET—Lord Strathcona addressing the gathering.

It must be remembered that this was an age when a man's worth was often judged by how much he tipped and how much he could afford to spend. Also, no doubt, most of the gentlemen present wished to impress their female dinner companions. Consequently, in a surprisingly short space of time, all of the boy's papers were sold at grossly inflated prices ranging from five to twenty dollars a copy. With the money safely tucked away in an inside pocket of his coat, the newsboy was escorted to the exit by a crowd of well-wishers, placed in a cab and sent home in style.

Newspapers of that day devoted much space to society events such as balls, dinners, receptions and the many charity affairs. It was the custom to describe the gowns and jewellery of female guests in glowing terms. In a report of a glittering charity ball attended

George E. McElroy

by Their Excellencies, the Governor-General and Lady Grey, the *Montreal Star* had this to say: "Her Excellency wore a handsome gown of cloth of gold embroidered in gold. With the diamond tiara, she wore a knot of gold tissue. She also wore a diamond necklace and a rope of large pearls and carried a large bouquet of white orchids." The report then went on to describe the finery of Her Excellency's ladies-in-waiting and prominent socialites.

The annual Horse Show, held at the Montreal Arena was another major social event and was billed, "Where the Aristocracy of the Horse World will show its paces to Montreal's 400 next week" and "With the Blue-bloods and Thoroughbreds at the Arena." There were also automobile and air shows which attracted widespread attention.

The Fete Nuit was Montreal's equivalent of the famed New Orleans' Mardi Gras. It was celebrated with a formal entertainment at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club while, on Fletcher's Field, colourfully garbed members of snowshoe clubs gathered to storm an ice palace with fireworks. Other forms of entertainment in season included thoroughbred racing at Blue Bonnets Racetrack, yacht races at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club, golf, polo, lacrosse, cricket, baseball, hockey, curling and ski jumping.

Montreal's leading theatres of this period were: His Majesty's, Theatre National, Princess, Theatre Francaise, Academy and Royal. Theatrical offerings included performances by "Rice and Cody, German comedians"; "Jennings and Renfrew, a team of singers and jokesters"; "Lyons and Parks, a high class musical act" and "the Brothers Damm, European gymnasts who are said to have one of the most novel acts ever presented at this house."

Women's interests and affairs were beginning to receive considerable public attention and references to women in business, on the labour front and in sports frequently appeared. A report on a convocation ceremony at McGill University made special mention of "capping lady graduates".

The crime news of the era seems almost tame when compared to that of today. The most violent crimes appear to have been "crimes of passion" such as the case of a man who shot and wounded a woman "he'd known but for three days". He then attempted suicide. "Crazed with anger and drink, John Schmidt attempts double crime" proclaimed the sub-heading. Other crimes included robbery and fraud, but most of the cases that appeared before the courts seem to have been for wife-battering, non-support and petty theft. One drawing bears the caption, "The police court is the lodestone which draws representations of almost every nationality in cosmopolitan Montreal." ♦

George E. McElroy is an artist, illustrator and writer who lives in Oakville, Ontario. His article on Weller's Express appeared in the April/May 1991 issue of "The Beaver". For an account of George E. McElroy senior's years in the North West Mounted Police, see "The Beaver", August/September 1989.

Memories of Canada's First Polish Settlement

Along the Opeongo Road

By Brenda Lee-Whiting

When Elizabeth Catherine Shalla of Barry's Bay, Ontario, died on 29 May 1978, her family thought so highly of her journals that described life in Canada's first Polish community that they made copies of her handwritten accounts. Her life of 88 years had spanned decades of living in Renfrew County from a pioneer livelihood in the bush to post-World War II prosperity. As a school teacher Elizabeth Shalla must have influenced thousands of children, and as a writer of journals, she has left a record of a way of life that has vanished.

Her father, John Etmanski, was born in 1853 in Kalisz, Poland, in the western third of this occupied country, where the German-speaking army of Prussia oppressed the Catholic Church, tried to discourage the use of the Polish language and made life miserable for the natives of the predominantly agricultural region. John Etmanski was only a small child when he emigrated with his parents, who settled in Sherwood Township on a farm about five miles north of Wilno in Renfrew County. Elizabeth's mother, Mary Kiedrowski, emigrated as a teenager in the company of neighbours, and was fortunate to obtain employment with an Irish family, the McCarthys, in Brudenell, a village on the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road.

She too had come from the western part of Poland, where the posters and agents of the Canadian government hoping to attract German farmers had been noticed by Polish families anxious to find land and freedom from government interference. Vacant land along the colonization road, offered to newcomers on condition that they fulfil certain obligations of settlement, appealed to both. From Baltic ports such as Hamburg and Bremen the Germans and the Poles set forth for Canada; though both groups were guided to the Opeongo Road, the Polish immigrants sought to keep themselves apart and travelled to the farthest end where they could live side by side.

John and Mary were married in 1876, presumably in the log chapel built by Father Joseph Specht who founded the first Polish parish in Canada here in 1875. During the years they farmed in Sherwood Township, 12 children were born to them. Elizabeth, the seventh child, was born 19 November 1890. It was customary to name a child after the saints near whose feasts the baby was born; the Feast of St. Elizabeth of Hungary falls on 19 November, while the Feast of St. Catherine is six days later. The new member of the family was baptized in the wooden church of St. Stanislaus Kostka at Wilno, which had been founded by the Rev. Ladislaus Dembski in 1880. The old cemetery that marks the site of this church (it burned down in 1936) has many of the early colonists from Poland buried there, but the earliest graves have no markers because wooden crosses have weathered and disintegrated.

As a small child, Elizabeth grew up in a community where the Polish language was universally spoken in the home as well as in the church. She could remember how her godfather, Jacob Lipinski, used to sing to her a ditty in Polish.

Oj! sa dolina sa, Olszowe nogi ma;
Debowe rogi, libowy agon.
Oj! sa dolina sa.

In the epidemic of diphtheria that swept through eastern Ontario in 1893, two of Elizabeth's older sisters died and were buried in the old Wilno cemetery. As members of the congregation, the children and parents of the Etmanski family regularly visited the graves of these children to say a prayer before entering the church. It was customary for Polish families to follow this observance. Before Mass there was the singing of *Godzinka* (the little office of the Blessed Virgin). During Lent, *Gorzkie Zale* (bitter sorrows) was sung by the congregation.

Elizabeth's first memory of home was a scoop-roofed shanty that had only two rooms. The second home, a large two-storey house, was built by a Polish carpenter when she was five years old in 1895, but she remembers that he planed his own wood because there were no planing mills in the Polish settlement at that time. Her brother, Peter, set fire to the shavings and was promptly punished.

Because her father hired Canadian men to work for him in lumbering, and they were boarded at his house, all the family had the opportunity to learn the English language, an important asset for the children. There

Brenda Lee-Whiting Photo

This hilly, wooded farm was chosen by August Yantha, one of the group of 24 Polish immigrants who first gained title to their properties in 1864. It was still being operated by members of the family a century later.

was no school nearby when Elizabeth was old enough for formal education, but classes were given in her home and by neighbours until a public school was built in her township. In 1898, Elizabeth, 8, and her sister, Mary, 10, walked six miles to the church of St. Stanislaus Kostka. Before leaving home, the two girls had fed livestock and milked the cows, and after their return they had to weed the garden and hoe potatoes.

When her father passed his 50th birthday, he decided to sell the farm and buy property in the village of Barry's Bay, land that included Drohan's Hotel. A new home was occupied by his family in 1904, and the Etmanskis mixed amicably with Polish and Irish residents who co-existed in approximately equal numbers, as they do today. Enrolled now in a separate school, Elizabeth was taught by a succession of Irish teachers. Her parents continued their tradition of hospitality, and since there was no presbytery for the parish priest and any visiting clergymen the Etmanskis were hosts to the spiritual advisers of the community. The first Catholic church for this village was located one and a half miles away, and when the second one was constructed in the parish, St. Hedwig's in 1914, the new priest, the Rev. Peter Biernacki, made his home with the Etmanskis. He was the first native-born son of Polish immigrants in Canada to be ordained, and was greatly revered by the local community, which he served until his death in 1958.

In June, 1906, Elizabeth passed her high school entrance examination and her parents agreed that she should attend classes at the Convent of Mary Immaculate in Pembroke, as a boarder. She was the first girl from a Polish-speaking family to attend this institution, founded in 1871.

Although the journey from Barry's Bay to Pembroke can be accomplished today by car in about an hour, the train journey in 1906 took eight hours, including a wait of two hours at Golden Lake and several stops to load or unload freight. In her studies, Elizabeth excelled, especially in French, and she was able to complete the prescribed three year course in two years, winning the Gold Medal for General Proficiency.

After passing her normal school examinations in June, 1909, Elizabeth Etmanski was granted an Interim Certificate for teaching, with the promise of a permanent certificate after two years of good behaviour and satisfactory work.

Back to the Polish settlement in Renfrew County came the young schoolteacher, and there was no difficulty in getting a school. Her first position, at the Killaloe Separate School, was obtained when the parish priest approached her parents to invite her to apply for the teaching job, which paid $375 for ten months.

It was time to make use of her education by passing it on to others, as she wrote in her journal. In addition to teaching all grades, and coping with about 50 pupils, she had to teach catechism on Sundays to the children of the parish.

At her next school, the old Wilno Separate School, there were almost twice as many pupils on the roll as

Brenda Lee-Whiting

A reminder of religious worship, this wayside cross along a road near Barry's Bay is a familiar sight to passersby.

the daily attendance records indicated. Elizabeth noted that children stayed home in turns, "Johnny" one day and "Mary" the next. In this way both children helped at home and received some education.

As a member of a large family in a closely-knit community, Elizabeth recorded the marriages, births and deaths. There was no hospital in Barry's Bay, so invalids spent months and even years in sick-beds at home where they were tended by members of the family, friends or neighbours who might spend the entire night with the patient, even after working all day.

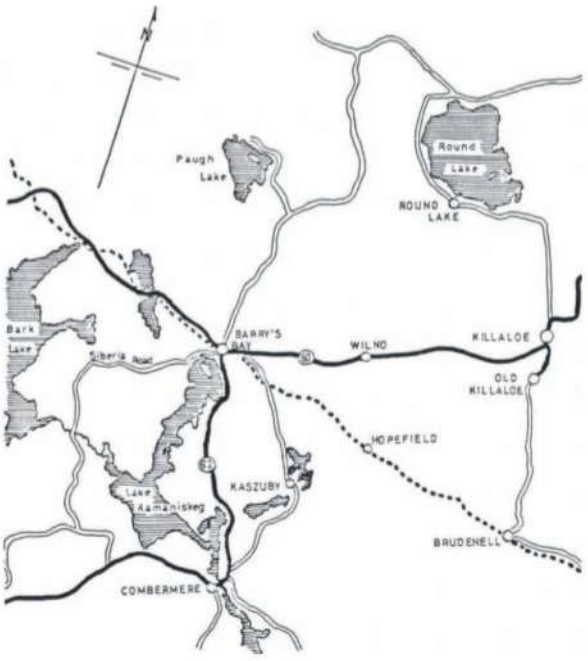
It was customary for a neighbour to make the coffin when a death occurred. It was assembled from wide boards that were planed by hand, covered with a black cloth — sometimes felt and sometimes a sateen with a crucifix tacked to the fabric — and lined with a white cotton material. The ritual observed during the night preceding the funeral was peculiar to the Polish people, a ceremony they called the *Pusta Noc.*

Residents from miles around came to the home of the bereaved, bringing with them a large hymn book, the *Spewnik.* The singers sat around a big table covered with a white cloth, led in their choice by a leader who was Valentine Chapeski in Elizabeth Etmanski's records. The first hymn was usually *Kto sie w Opieke* (He who casts himself under God's protection). Other hymns were devoted to the mercy and glory of God or dedicated to the patron saints of the deceased. There were hymns at the wake that portrayed death and judgement and the final singing of the Angelus came at six o'clock in the morning.

There was an intermission at midnight so that the singers could take a break and have refreshments, in company with all who were present. Those who did not sing were expected to keep silent during the night-long vigil, though even young children were present and were rebuked if they misbehaved by talking or laughing.

In the Polish settlement of scattered farms in hilly, wooded countryside, the devotion to the Catholic Church was not confined to Sundays. At the intersections of dirt roads, the tall crosses made of wood reminded the passers-by of their faith. These wayside crosses (*krzyzowki*) were said to be installed by the owners of the properties, as a token of thanksgiving, according to Elizabeth Etmanski, for their family being spared death during an epidemic. She recalled that her parents always abstained from meat on Christmas Day as thanksgiving for their family having been spared during a pestilence. (Some of these crosses have been restored or replaced by the third generation of the Polish families who pioneered in Renfrew County.)

In this sketch map of the Barry's Bay-Wilno-Killaloe area, the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road is seen as a dotted line.



Photograph from the author's collection

Elizabeth (Etmanski) Shalla in later life with a group of her pupils at Barry's Bay.

The Polish language being the common tongue of the people then, it is not surprising that Elizabeth wrote of the greetings that a visitor made on entry to a home. The first words were "*Niech bedzie pochwalony Jesus Chrystus*", (May Jesus Christ be praised), and the response was "*Na Wieki Wiekow Amen*", (For ever and ever, Amen). Departing from a home, the visitor would say "*Badj z Bogiem*" (Stay with God), and when somebody performed a favour they would be rewarded with "*Bog Zaptae*", (May God repay you), from the grateful recipient.

One visitor who announced his arrival more dramatically was the *druzba* or groomsman, who called at homes to invite people to his wedding. He travelled on foot with a pistol and an umbrella decorated with a flower. The umbrella was only a protection against the elements, but the pistol was a signal to be fired as he approached each farm where he was planning to issue an invitation to his wedding. All ages stopped work when the *druzba* entered the house, in order to listen to his recital of the *razba*, the invitation from the bride's parents to attend the festivities, which were the occasion for feasting and dancing. At some weddings, the celebrations continued for two or three days, recalled Elizabeth, who attended her first in 1911. It may have turned her thoughts to marriage.

Continuing her career as a teacher, she accepted in 1913 a country school, about five miles from Wilno. There were no public roads open in the winters before snowploughs were in common use, so the teacher had to wade through deep snow across the fields. She boarded with a quiet couple and spent long winter evenings making crocheted lace. By the summer of 1915, she had decided to marry Alex Shalla, whom she had known for two years. She became the wife of a labourer who worked at a sawmill, for a wage of one and a half dollars a day, and on 23 May 1916, she became the mother of a baby boy. As was customary, the baby was born at home, with the aid of a midwife, there being no doctors in Barry's Bay. The second child was born on 30 December 1917, and the young mother was busy with sewing all their clothes, as well as looking after the livestock, the garden and her home. Her husband was away for six days of the week, walking many miles to come home on Sunday.

In Barry's Bay, in a house that they rented from her father, Mrs. Alex Shalla had a Jersey cow which she pastured in the bush and brought home for milking. Like other residents, she had enough land to keep chickens and pigs, and in her garden grew potatoes, carrots, beets, beans, lettuce, cucumbers, radishes and corn. Food had to be kept cold with ice that was cut

in the early spring from Lake Kaminiskeg in blocks, and packed with sawdust in the icehouse as insulation. Coal oil lamps supplied heating in the home, with lanterns to light the way outside. One of her morning chores was to trim the wicks and wash the chimneys. Heat was supplied by two wood stoves, the one in the kitchen being used to cook the food.

Although the end of World War I meant the end of anxiety for such as her brother, Peter, who returned from the war with a limp, it did not end the agony for those men of Polish descent who had volunteered to fight in Poland in an army that was trained at Niagara-on-the-Lake. One of the 28 men who went from the Barry's Bay area to join this special force was Felix Shalla, Elizabeth's brother-in-law. He went overseas in 1918 and did not return until 1920, a bachelor whose health never recovered from the hardships that he had endured but would not talk about.

Elizabeth's eighth and last child was born on 24 July 1935, by which time Barry's Bay and most of the country was struggling with the years of the Depression. Her husband, who was now janitor at the new church and school in Barry's Bay, had a regular monthly wage, but those who were unemployed could sign up for government work on the roads at a wage of 88 cents a day. A series of deaths in the family made this decade a tragic time for Elizabeth, but the greatest shock of all was her husband's sudden collapse from a heart condition made worse by 'flu on 6 March 1937. She was left with children ranging in age from 1½ years to 20, and survived on a Mother's Allowance of $35 a month. The number of people in her home began to dwindle, her oldest daughter entering a convent, the sons seeking work elsewhere and daughters getting married.

When World War II was over, this teacher's skill was recognized by the parish priest of Barry's Bay, the Rev. Biernacki, who asked her to help him keep the Polish language alive. He had obtained permission to have Polish taught in St. Joseph's School, where the majority of pupils were of Polish descent. On four days a week, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., with a different group of pupils each day, Mrs. Elizabeth Shalla taught the Polish language. Each year, she coached pupils to perform in a special concert to honour the Polish Day on 3 May.

She became a regular member of the staff in the years following 1955, but still taught Polish to classes in the noon periods. Mrs. Shalla also translated hymns from the English language to Polish for the school choir. She had been bereaved by the death of her mother in 1951 at the age of 95 years, and this loss caused her to reflect on the hardships of the pioneers who immigrated to Canada from Poland because their land was occupied; the contrast of freedom in their new

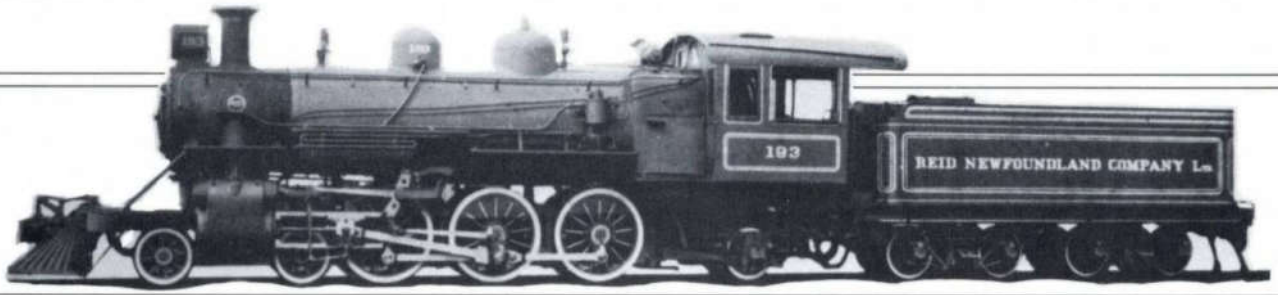
Brenda Lee-Whiting Photo

Most of the wooden crosses, photographed in the old cemetery at Wilno in the 1960s, have now disappeared due to weathering.

setting, compared with the oppression they had suffered in their native country had made the toil in the stony fields a burden worth bearing. The strong faith and practice of religion that had been instilled in the next generation was also a legacy of the pioneers.

During the 12 years that Mrs. Elizabeth (Etmanski) Shalla taught Grade 3 pupils in the Separate Schools in Barry's Bay, from 1955 to 1967, she too played a part in encouraging the children of the first Polish settlement in Canada to maintain their heritage. She enjoyed teaching eight-year-olds and some of them today remember her as the best teacher they ever had. ◆

Brenda Lee-Whiting of Deep River, Ontario, has written extensively on pioneer groups in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Canada.



ST. JOHN'S TO PORT AUX BASQUES

When the Going Was Bad

By Les Harding

In the early days of this century the Reid-Newfoundland Company operated a fiercely individualistic narrow-gauge train called "The Cross-country Express." According to the Reid Company's promotional literature, the lucky passengers could expect to be whisked effortlessly down the rails, from St. John's to Port aux Basques, and arrived refreshed, well-fed, without a care or worry, about twenty-five hours later. Officially the train ran three times a week in summer and twice a week during the winter months. It did not always work out that way in practice. With disturbing regularity, bridges were washed out, trains derailed, locomotives buried in thirty-foot snow drifts, and box cars blown off the track. The rocky roadbed looked ominously temporary. Its track seemed to go straight up hillsides and madly zigzag through a maze of ponds and bogs. Embankments were too steep for safety and the cuttings beside streams too narrow. The company felt compelled to advertise that, "It is the record of the railway that it has never killed a passenger."

A typical passenger train of the period might consist of several wooden passenger cars, two sleeping cars, a baggage car, mail car, and dining car. Newfoundlanders, unfamiliar with anything else, thought the little train, as it chugged out of the station, to be just about the most marvellous thing they had ever seen.

To a traveller from "Up Along", a Newfoundland train must have been a thing of trepidation. More than one foreign traveller took his revenge in print about the battering he had endured. J. Rogers wrote in 1912 ". . . how we did bump over that line; whether it was the fault of the laying of the permanent way or the driving I cannot say, but in a long experience of railway travelling I have never been so jolted, the driver seeming to take a special pleasure in pulling up with a jerk sufficient to knock over any one standing up, and then start, if possible in a rougher manner. However, no one seemed to mind . . . "

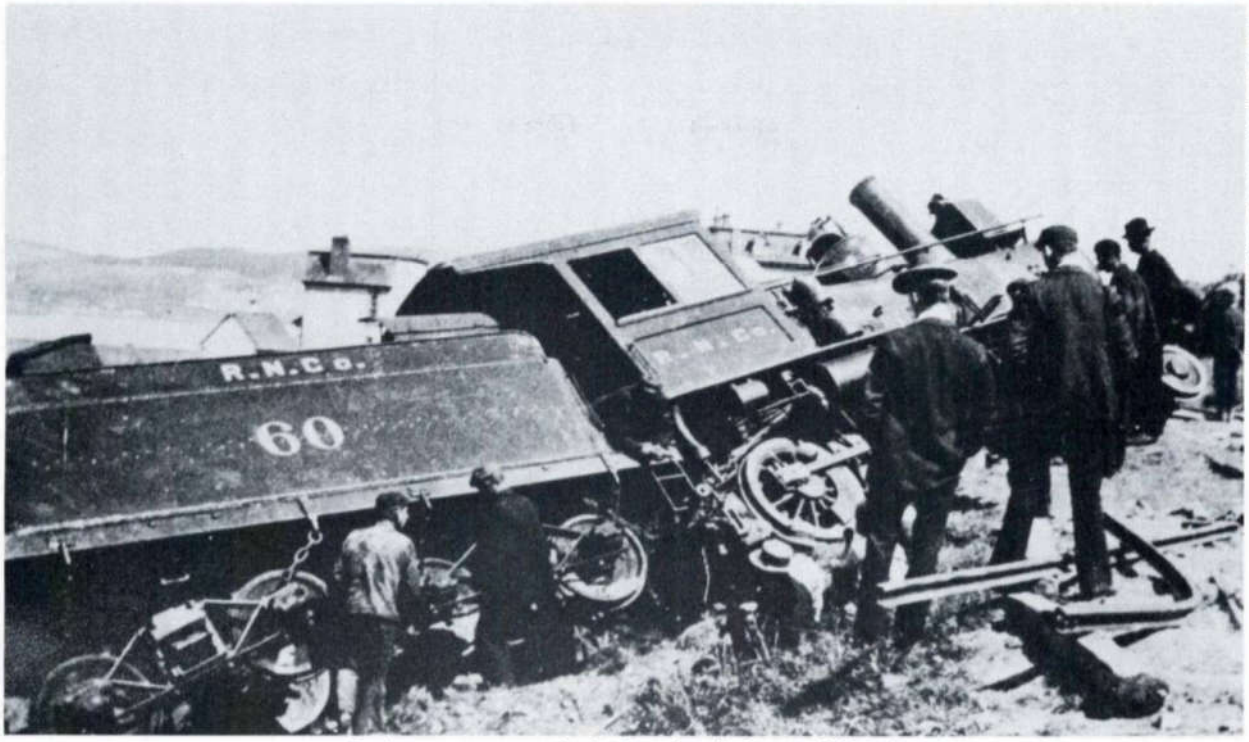
As the train slowly bumped its way into the interior and night came on those who had paid for a berth retired to the sleeping car. At the best of times it can be a tricky operation dressing and undressing in the confines of a narrow berth, but with the rocking and rolling of the Newfoundland express it was virtually impossible. It was laughable to watch a tired commercial traveller shyly peeping through the curtains to determine if there was a stretch of straight track up ahead. If there was, he would leap into the aisle in a mad attempt to change his clothes before he fell over on the floor.

The end of each sleeping car was reserved for washing. This, too, required considerable practice. If the train took a sudden sharp turn, as it was in the habit of doing, a passenger was liable to smash his skull into the mirror over the washstand. If the train pulled up with a jolt, several passengers were liable to be thrown on top of each other while washing their hands. Shaving was the hardest art of all. It was not unusual to see the faces of male passengers covered with bandages.

The next morning as the train approached Port aux Basques it might make an unscheduled stop of several hours. The problem was the wind. A gust could whip in off the sea and whistle around the base of Table Mountain at a speed of 150 miles per hour, quite enough to tip a car off the track and into a stream. If the wind subsided to their liking the trainmen would guide their charge through a swamp, over a viaduct, and into the terminal at Port aux Basques. Canada-bound passengers would embark on the SS *Bruce*. Eight hours later they would be in Nova Scotia.

It was hard to believe, but the cross-country express was considered to be a luxury train. The adventurous traveller would buy a ticket on the "accommodation train." The accommodation train was a freight with a passsenger car hitched on behind.

An English sportsman by the name of J.G. Millais in a delightfully catty book, *Newfoundland and Its*



Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador

One bump too many put this Reid Newfoundland train off the rails.

Untrodden Ways (1907), has left us with a slightly hyperbolic account of travel on the accommodation train:

> The people of the island regard the accommodation train with dread; strangers suffering a single journey resolve never to repeat the experiment. But the accommodation train must accommodate somebody — perhaps it is the Old Gentleman himself! Every second day that passes, Satan must bless the island's government for running such a show entirely for his benefit. Could the walls of those 'First Class' carriages speak, what a tale of wicked thought and wickeder language they could tell, and how oft had the nature of the most gentle of men been turned to acid and gall through the bitter experience of a night's travel!"

Millais goes on to say that it was once his great misfortune to be waiting for the accommodation train in Glenwood (the train was six hours late at the time) and the stationmaster, an eleven year old boy, told him a story. One day the boy saw a black bear approach the station. "He warn't walking away either, he come straight towards me . . . I stopped right still, and as I hadn't no gun I jes' said somethin' that I knew would scare him proper . . . I ses quiet like, 'Go way, you black devil, or I'll send you to St. John's by the accommodation train,' and you should ha' seen him scoot."

The long suffering Mr. Millais was scheduled to leave Glenwood station at 7 P.M.. "Punctually" at 1 A.M. the train arrived. "Far away, out in the darkness, overhanging a pool of water, was the passenger coach, on which was printed the curious legend 'First Class'. The train was designated as 'mixed', not out of a compliment to the passengers, but to individualize its component parts. It is really a baggage train, with a coach sandwiched between the trucks, so that the passengers may experience the full joys of shunting, which takes place at every heap of lumber piled beside the track between the Bay of Island and St. John's, a distance of five hundred miles. This journey is variously performed in two days, or, with the help of a snow storm or a spring wash-out, in a week.

"I opened the door of the 'First Class' carriage, and was at once greeted with a terrible atmosphere. There were eight hard benches, capable of holding two passengers on each, and occupied by twelve men, four women, and three children. Of course there was no seat to be had, so I sat on a biscuit box and allowed the door to stand open a minute although it was freezing slightly. Soon a man from outside came and shut it. This went on for some time until there really was a little fresh air in the car, and I tried to get asleep sitting on my biscuit tin."

The train spent four hours at the station before getting underway. An engine was coupled on with enough

Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador

Passengers wait for a tardy train near Placentia, 1910.

force to throw the poor passengers end over end. "All the men in the carriage woke up and swore. Then another fearful jolt, which put out the light and sent me into the arms of a perfectly innocent old lady, and off we went. These fearful shocks are caused by the engine's playful way of coupling on; this is effected apparently by adhesion, and it has to make a run at the train to make sure of sticking. This happened whenever the engine was required to detach for wood, coal or water, or the driver went to gossip with the section man or the stationmaster.

"After swinging, creaking, and swaying round the marvellous curves of the line I became sleepy, and so spread two weekly editions of the *Times* on the floor of the carriage, placed my ulster above these, and, lying flat out, had a very nice nap for several hours. When I woke up it was broad daylight, and somehow I had imagined we had got on splendidly and were nearly at Port Blandford. I said as much to a pleasant looking man sitting close to me, and the humour of the remark, quite unintentional, was received with roars of laughter by all the other men in the carriage.

"'Why, we're nowhere near Gambo yet.' [Gambo is about thirty-six miles from Glenwood.]"

One good thing you could say about the cross-country express was the food was good and that there was plenty of it. A passenger on the accommodation train would soon find that food was non-existent.

"Quite as tiresome a feature as the train itself was the fact that it was well nigh impossible to get provisions *en route*. Except at Whitburn (eight or nine hours out of St. John's), where it is possible to obtain a slice of corned beef and a cup of tea — there is no other halting place where food can be obtained. My friends in the train had telegraphed on to Gambo to have a breakfast ready at the hotel (*sic*). When we got there the 'lady' in charge said she did not make breakfasts for travellers, but that we could have 'a glass of whisky' apiece at an exorbitant price. At Gambo I managed to steal two pints of hot water out of a section man's house which I invaded, and so got enough to give the tired-looking women and children some tea. I also had a small supply of biscuits and cooked caribou meat, and this was all most of these unfortunate passengers had in thirty-six hours' travel."

The remainder of the trip to St. John's was quiet, except for when they pulled into Whitbourne Station and the train jumped the track ploughing up the right of way for two hundred yards; and when, a little further on at Avondale, the locomotive blew a cylinder head. The passengers spent their time picking blueberries and making snide comments. Eventually the travellers did arrive in St. John's, and what is more, they reached the city, ". . . within a day of the advertised time, which is considered pretty good travelling time in Newfoundland." ♦

Les Harding of St. John's, Newfoundland, recently published a book on little known Canadian explorers called "The Voyages of Lesser Men" (Escart Press, 1991).

MAPPING THE FUR TRADE

Inland from the Bay

By John Jackson

One of the maps preserved in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg is a chart that was drawn at Albany Factory on Hudson Bay in 1791 but which contains a surprising amount of information about other areas of the North West of much earlier date. There is information relating to the upper Saskatchewan River during the period 1785-1787, the same general period covered by Edward Umfreville's *The Present State of Hudson's Bay.* The depiction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers is earlier, dating from the years 1779-1781. The fragment of the upper Missouri River near the mouth of Knife River is particularly valuable because historians and anthropologists will recognize it as the last site of the Hidatsa/Mandan Indians before they were destroyed by the smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782. Coupled with other unpublished material now coming to light, the map suggests the extent of the Snake Indian (Eastern Shoshoni) expansion on the northern plains after their acquisition of horses and reopens the mystery of the proper identification of the Shevitoon Indians.

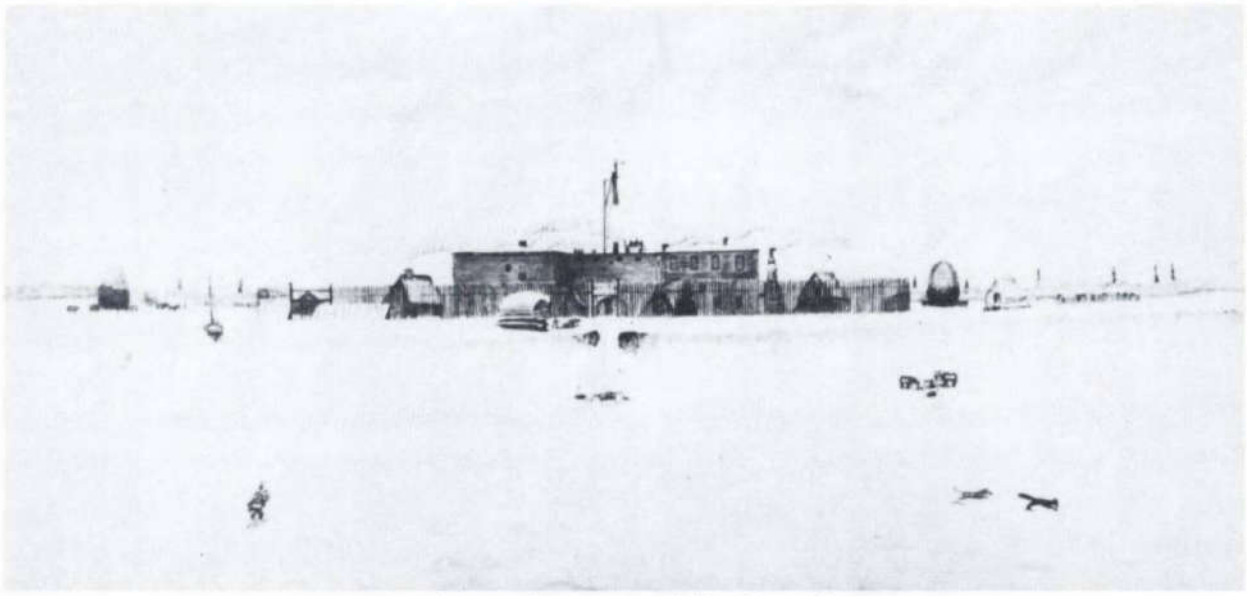
Professor Richard Ruggles of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, so completely inventoried the map resources of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg that his lists even describe the maps that "should" be there. He identified map HBCA G1/13 as the joint product of Albany Factory chief Edward Jarvis, Henley House master John Hodgson, and the former Canadian trader Donald Mackay who had recently arrived on the Albany River. Professor Ruggles previously shared this information with the author and also published a small scale version of the 1791 map in his article, "Mapping the Interior Plains of Rupert's Land by the Hudson's Bay Company to 1870", in the journal *Great Plains Quarterly,* for Summer, 1984.

The document that was spread on the archives table was a manuscript map with the rivers and lakes of the North West in brown ink and contained within a gently tinted border. After almost two centuries the paper mounted on linen has taken on the golden patina of age. It measures 52.5 cm x 74 cm (20¾"x29½") which is not a large map when one considers the large area that it describes. The map extends from Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabaska in the northwest corner to the east shore of Hudson Bay on the northeast, the Ottawa River a little above Montreal in the southeast and a short section of the Missouri River in the southwest corner. No scale or compass rose is included.

The identification of the map and the approximate time of its creation are confirmed by several references to it in the Albany River District journals and correspondence. Mackay specifically mentions it in his 1792 travel journal and again in his 1796-1797 Albany to York Factory journal. Professor Ruggles believes that as many as three copies were made.

Donald Mackay came to the Albany River somewhat by accident after leaving the service of a Canadian trader to the Nipigon country in 1790. He intended to go to York Factory and engage in the Hudson's Bay Company fur trade on the Saskatchewan River. Seeing the potential of a Hudson's Bay Company inland penetration from James Bay, he convinced Albany chief Edward Jarvis to support his exploration for a feasible water route to link the Albany River to the northwest supply mainline between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg. The map was not drawn to demonstrate those local linkages, but rather to graphically demonstrate the potential trading areas open to Albany's exploitation if it could break free from the bayside.

Mackay's previous experience in the inland trade meant that he had the perspective to develop such a strategic undertaking. His trading career began in 1779 on the lower Assiniboine River and from 1785 to 1787 he conducted a private trading venture on the upper Saskatchewan. In the last endeavor Mackay was unsuccessful and attributed his disappointment to the ruthless competition of the wintering traders of the North West Company of Montreal, an opposition that the Hudson's Bay Company also knew and resented. Mackay was determined to wreck the virtual monopoly of the Canadian traders by bringing the Hudson's Bay Company into competition along their vital supply lines. By cutting off provisions, subverting workmen and generally making the middle passage more expensive



Hudson's Bay Company Archives

An early nineteenth-century view of Albany Factory, from a watercolour by William Richards.

Mackay saw that he could relieve competitive pressure on the Saskatchewan and Athabaska operations of the HBC. As early as 1778 he wrote to the London Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company who expressed guarded interest in his proposals, but expected him to initiate them from York Factory.

The bayside management of Company affairs in Rupert's Land still followed genteel eighteenth-century business manners, and chiefs did not enjoy wide discretion. Nevertheless when Mackay and his kinsman, John Mackay, appeared at Albany in September 1790 Jarvis risked the personal initiative of outfitting Donald and sending him inland to discover the passage to the voyageur mainline. As Mackay passed Henley House, the first Company post above Albany Factory, in February 1791 he probably left his previous sketches and observations with the master, John Hodgson. Hodgson, who began his career as an apprentice, was from the London Grey Coat School, and had already prepared several maps for submission to London. When Mackay returned in August Jarvis was ready to submit his proposals and the map to the London Committee. He wrote that he was sending in Mackay's "journals and chart, the latter is a proper appendage to the general one and points out more clearly than we knew before the route of the Canadians thro' Lake St. Anns [Lake Nipigon] to their several posts in the Little North and the communication of Osnaburgh with Portage de L'isle". Mackay also took the opportunity to write to London and the letter bears the London Secretary's endorsement, "February 1792 . . . chart sent to Mr. Governor & not returned".

The notation suggests that some of Mackay's information got past the jealous second officer at Albany, John McNab, who "accidentally" neglected to include some critical letters with the rest of the packet for that year. That meant that the information could not reach London until the return of the ships in 1793.

Mackay continued making inland journeys and was returning from the latest in July 1792 when a boating accident at the Three Snake Falls on the middle Albany River cost the lives of two of his most trusted companions and swept away most of the equipment. Mackay also lost his "large chart of the North West, and the interior country corrected with many rivers & lakes not yet published by any who as yet drawn or delineated any chart of the country".

Mackay's bad luck continued in the following years when McNab succeeded Jarvis as chief at Albany Factory and effectively frustrated his vision. Still enjoying the confidence of the London Committee, Mackay attempted to shift operations to York Factory where he believed the bayside chief would be more supportive of his expansion plans. But this was a period when the Company was short of trading goods and workmen and local officers jealously guarded their manpower at the cost of the broader perspective. Once again disappointed in his expectations, Mackay finally sailed from York in 1799 to return to his home in Sutherlandshire, northern Scotland.

The map that finally reached London in the fall of 1793 was soon turned over to the cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith. Mackay's information concerning the Assiniboine/Missouri rivers was published almost ver-

batim on Arrowsmith's 1795 map and this remained the most widely circulated geographical information about those parts of North America until Arrowsmith's revised map dated 1802. By then another map had also been published in Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal . . . through the Continent of North America . . . in the years 1789 and 1793* which had the benefit of David Thompson's 1797 survey to determine where the 49th parallel of latitude passed between the Assiniboine and Missouri rivers.

Donald Mackay was well qualified to draw a map of the western rivers. He arrived on the Assiniboine River with John Ross in 1779. Their first trading house was located near the modern city of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, but in the second year they moved nearer the mouth of the Souris River. Mackay had gleaned information about the country from old French traders he met at Grand Portage during the summer rendezvous. He mentioned "Old Bissonette [who] wintered on the west side of Lac du Bois for 48 years" and identifies the house of La Prammade near the forks of the Red and Assiniboine with the very early date of 1730. The local Assiniboine Indians were also willing to furnish some geographical information as long as it did not threaten their trade with the Mandans. The map, which can be checked against statements in Mackay's memoir, which is in a private collection, or against his 1793 Brandon House journal, shows the Assiniboine, which Mackay calls the Red River, and locates along it Mr. Corrie's House, Mr. Ross's Stoppage, Mr. Blondeau's location of 1779 (an apparent misreading by Hodgson of 1769), and Robert Grant's Fort des Epinettes. Mackay called Souris River "the Little Missouri" and, like the 1734 *Carte de La Jemeraye* published by Antoine Champagne, thinks of it as the main stream, a mistake that seems insupportable from direct observation. He also has Tortoise River branching off to the east and calls Turtle Mountain, Moosehead Hill.

From the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, along the south side of the Assiniboine River, Mackay located Indians called Creek. Those were the Cree hunters who were moving into the region from the east. Within a few years the population would be a mixture of Cree, Ojibwa, Ottawa and Assiniboine. Between the Assiniboine and Moosehead Hill Mackay notes, "here great numbers of Indians resort, about 300 tents have been seen at once [one time]." His figure of 300 tents represents a probable Indian population of 2,400 to 3,000 persons which compares favourably with Alexander Henry the elder's estimate made in 1776.

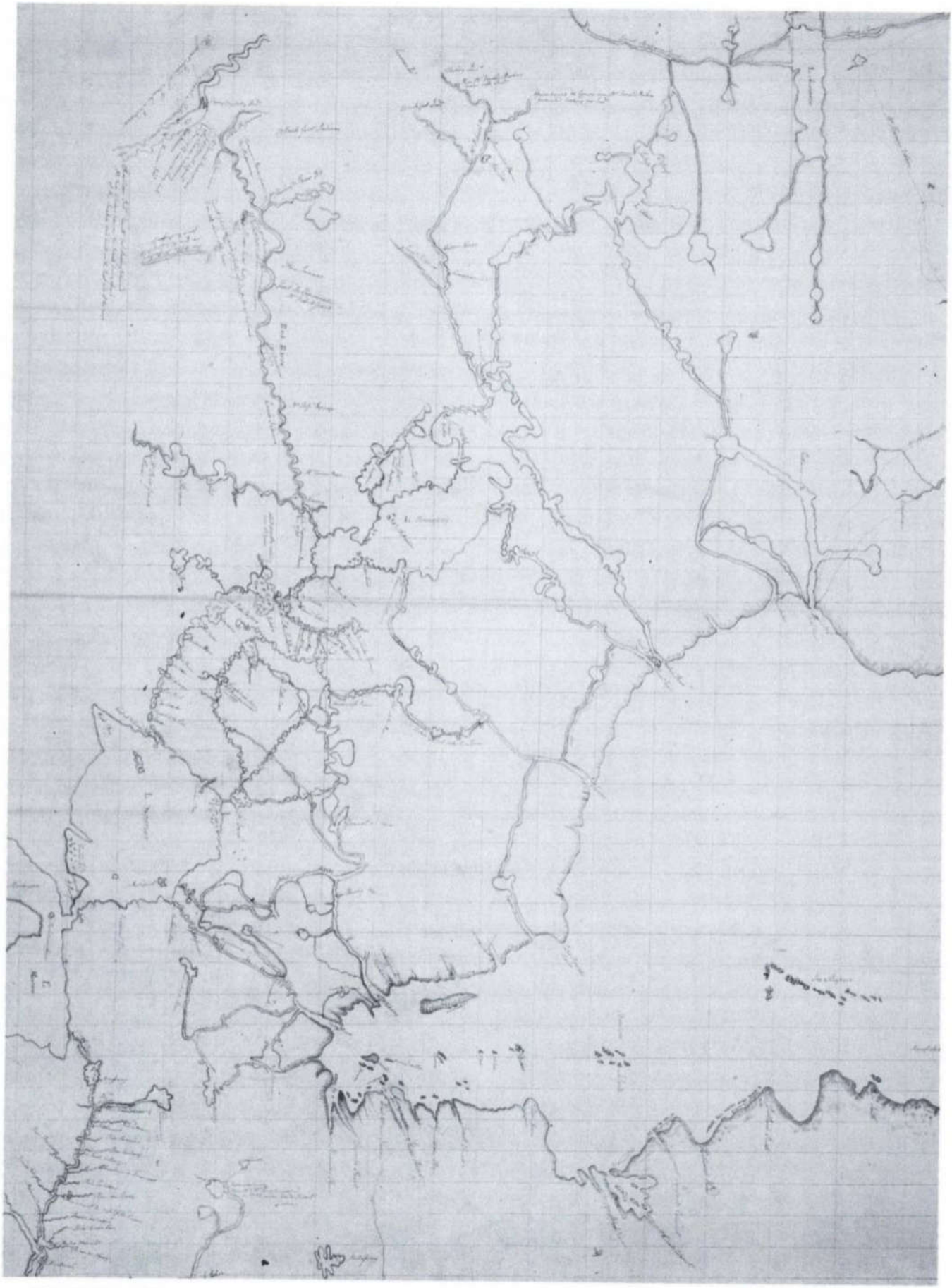
In late fall 1780 Mackay and four men left to subsist themselves away from the post, and visit the Indians living on the Missouri River. When their Cree guide tried to extort a larger fee, Mackay characteristically drove him off and then got hopelessly lost on the plains. His memoir describes their sufferings during the 92 days that were spent on the open prairie living on buffalo that Mackay finally learned to kill. In the spring they contacted some Assiniboines living in the lee of "Mountain De Tortue" who conducted them to the Big Belly Indian villages on the Missouri.

The location and identification of the Indian tribes living on the Missouri River has generated considerable anthropological interest and they are usually described as sedentary horticulturists living in relatively permanent villages on the upper Missouri River and drawing Indian and European traders from the north. While the last documented trip to those Indians had been made by the La Verendrye family of French traders in 1743, it is apparent that independent traders had continued to cross the Mandan Connection. A Michilimackinac trader named McIntosh claimed to have spent Christmas 1773 in the Mandan villages but this was not published until many years later and derives from hearsay.

The Indians described by Mackay lived on a short section of the Missouri River in four distinct towns. Beginning with the lowest village, he named the Shevitoon Indians and next the Mandan Indians. The third town was that of the Shoe (Awaxawi also called Soulier Noir or Black Shoe Indians, a division of the Hidatsa) and highest on the river lived the Flying Big Bellies (Hidatsa proper who were associated with the Awaxawi and Awatixa).

A note on Donald's map states that these tribes were living on islands in the river and restricting their hunting to the east side of the river because they feared the Snake Indians. The map shows four islands to support this statement but does suggest a river entering from the west. Donald's description raises a considerable question. W. Raymond Wood of the University of Missouri, who has been intimately concerned with the anthropological survey of the various village sites along the upper Missouri, found nothing to indicate the existence, or disappearance, of river islands in this area. Maps made during the boundary survey of 1872-1879 show sixty islands in the river between Knife River and White Earth Creek. As this survey was made in October when the river was low, many of these might have been seasonal. But Mackay visited the Big Bellies before the spring freshet began. Is it possible that Mackay found the Hidatsa living in some other place on the river?

Another conflict with accepted understanding concerns the village of Mandan Indians that Mackay found living near the Hidatsa in 1781. It is generally accepted that those people lived sixty miles to the south, where La Verendrye visited them in 1738 and 1743, and they did not move north to consolidate survivors until after the smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782.



Mackay also mentions the Shevitoon Indians who lived down river and are distinguished from the others. In 1787 Donald's former clerk, James Mackay, travelled to the Missouri and described the Mandaines, Manitouris and Wattasoons who were now living in five villages built on the elevated plains, three on the south side of the river and two on the north. Later Spanish traders from St. Louis also visited the Mandan villages where they interviewed Old Menard, the "residenter" among the Mandans since 1778. Menard told them that he had accompanied the Hidatsa to visit their Crow kinsmen on the Yellowstone River while the Shevitoons were then living north of the Missouri. Jean Baptiste Trudeau (Truteau) reported this information in 1796, and next year another trader, John Evans, drew a map of the upper Missouri which placed the Shevitoons north of the Missouri between the mouths of the Yellowstone and Milk rivers. This group still awaits proper identification but it appears that they moved westward with the retreating Snake Indians at some time after the smallpox years.

Mackay only spent ten days at the Hidatsa villages. Much of that time taken up with feasting and trading ceremonies, punctuated by a jealous interchange between rival villages. His opportunity for exploration was limited and he was not a keen observer of ethnological information. Soon after he left the villages on 26 April 1781 those folk contracted smallpox.

The disease had been active in the east during the American Revolution and relentlessly moved westward destroying unresistant tribes. The sedentary village Indians, who were particularly susceptible to contagion, may have lost as much as 68 percent of an estimated population of 11,500. From them the disease spread rapidly across the prairies. The sudden, shocking destruction of population set off a chain of tribal readjustments and the Western Indian world was never quite the same again. On his map, and in his memoir, Donald Mackay captured the image of the peoples of the Assiniboine and Missouri at the last moment before catastrophe.

By 1795 the upper Missouri River was attracting the attention of several nations and the activities of fur traders were beginning to gain political significance. Donald Mackay's clerk on the Saskatchewan, James McKay, left him in 1786 and went to the Assiniboine River as a trader. The next year he travelled to the Mandan villages on the Missouri River. Later, having transferred himself to St. Louis in Spanish Louisiana, James connected with traders interested in developing business on the upper river. Like Donald on the Albany, James furnished information to the Spanish Surveyor — General Antoine Soulard, who incorporated it into his map titled *Idee Topographique des Hauts du Mississippi et du Missouri* dated 1795. Several tracings of this survive but the most authentic appears to be the copy in the Newberry Library collection which Abraham Nasatir published in his two-volume study, *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804.*

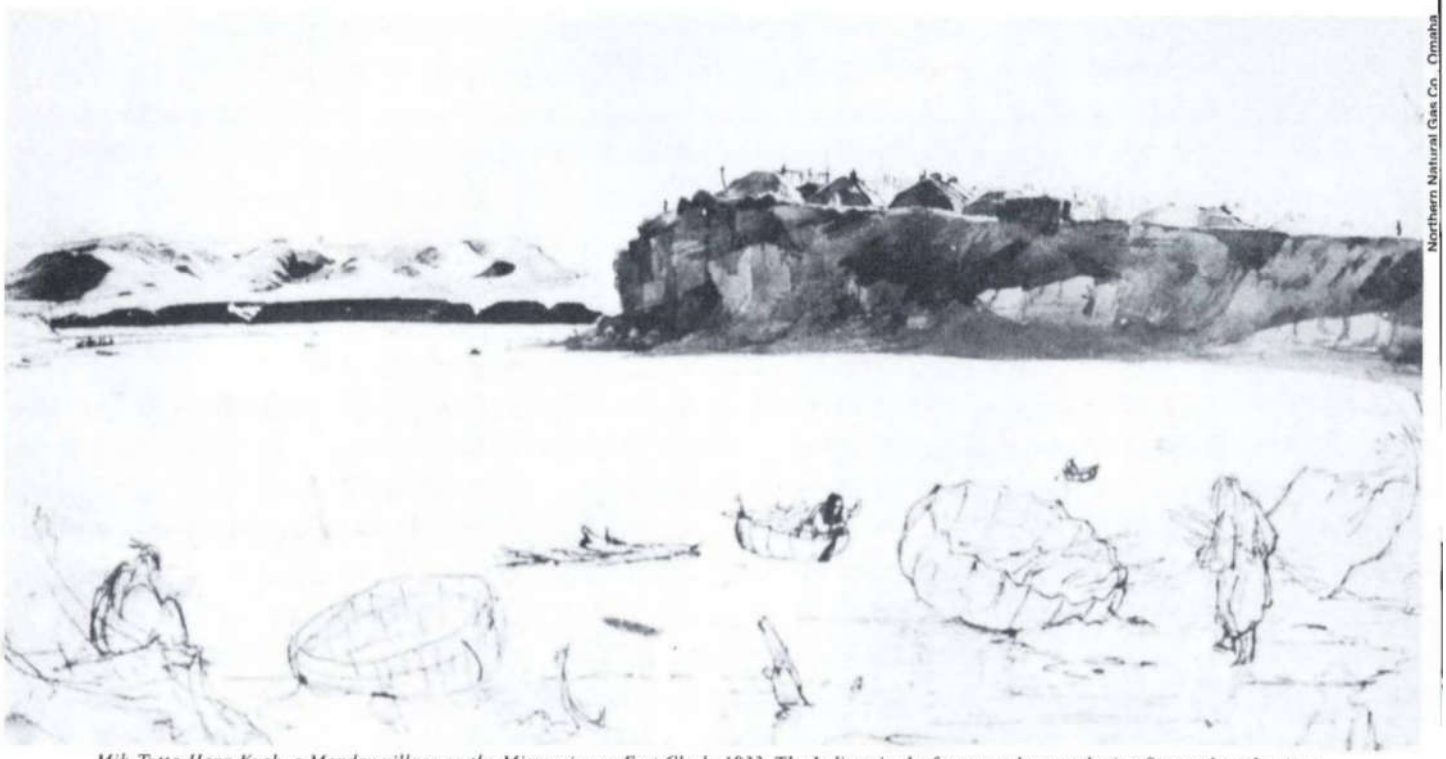
The 1791 map, from the collection of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

James Mackay's contribution to Surveyor Soulard's understanding of northern geography did not extend beyond the Saskatchewan and the North is dismissed as *pays inconnu* with the qualifying territorial disclaimer, *Possession Espagnole*. The Soulard and 1795 Arrowsmith maps were drawn about the same time and contain quite similar information about the east side of the Rocky Mountains. The Spanish version seems to derive from a Hudson's Bay Company trader, James Gaddy the elder, who travelled with the Piegan Blackfeet in 1785-1786. James Mackay appropriated this information and left the Saskatchewan before the trips made by David Thompson or Peter Fidler. Arrowsmith's information of 1795 probably came from maps submitted by those men through Company channels. But Donald Mackay's 1791 information on the upper Saskatchewan was limited to his direct experience and shows that he explored beyond the outpost he maintained in opposition to Edward Umfreville and above his base at Pine Island.

As an ethnohistorical contribution, Donald Mackay's map is an important reference point for dating the Indian situation at a critical turning point, the smallpox epidemic of 1781-1782. In the six years between the visits of the two Mackays the northwestern Indian world was changed forever. The surviving tribesmen were forced to regroup at Knife River.

Not all of the information contained in the map can be attributed to Mackay. The Albany River traders had been compiling information about the interior for many years. The Hudson's Bay Company surveyor, Philip Turnor, travelled up the Saskatchewan as far as Hudson House a little above the mouth of the South Branch in 1778 before being transferred to the Albany River to conduct another investigation. He may have left information relating to northern departments with the southern traders. Dr. Ruggles points out that none of Mackay's cartographic forms appear on Philip Turnor's map of 1792, nor in his *magnum opus* drawn in London in 1794.

On the other hand Donald Mackay could have held several geographical wild cards. Between his two trading adventures in the West he worked for the Superintendent of Northern Indians, Colonel John Campbell, and lived in his house. Campbell's frequent visitor was his father-in-law, Luc de Chapet de La Corne, generally known as St. Luc la Corne, a former



Mih-Tutta-Hang-Kush, a Mandan village on the Missouri near Fort Clark, 1833. The Indians in the foreground are gathering firewood on the river in "bull boats" made of willow and buffalo hides. Drawing by Karl Bodmer.

French Superintendent of Indians and apparent inheritor of many records dealing with the earlier French expansion on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers. Access to those maps may have explained why Mackay was guilty of the same misidentification of the main branch of the Assiniboine as La Verendrye made in the additions to the 1733 "Carte de La Jemeraye".

After returning from his first trading voyage to the West Mackay may have seen Jonathan Carver's book *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* which related an earlier experience but was not published until 1781. Another Southwest trader who knew Carver in the Indian country and later moved into the North West fur trade was Peter Pond. Pond penetrated into the Athabaska country before Mackay arrived on the Assiniboine but he was in Montreal during the 1784-1785 low point in his checkered career, peddling his geographical information to the British or the American Congress. One tracing of his map was dated New York, 1 March 1785. As this was the time when Mackay was preparing for his adventure to the Saskatchewan, it is possible that the two traders met in the small town of Montreal and exchanged interests in western geography. Pond and Donald Mackay both returned from the North West after 1787. Thus it is possible that Mackay could have contributed some second-hand information about the country north of the Saskatchewan River which he did not see in person until his return to North America in 1806.

Beyond an exercise in cartographic history and additional information on the career of Donald Mackay, this reconsideration of the 1791 map provides an important date and opens several puzzles. Combined with information from Mackay's memoir, the map helps date the onset of the smallpox epidemic to a period between April and October 1781. The questions include the extent of horse-borne Snake Indian expansion on the northern plains, the impact of smallpox on their recession, the early relationship of the sedentary village Indians of the upper Missouri and the possibility that the Mandans were moving back and forth between Heart and Knife River locations before the impact of smallpox. Donald's description of the Missouri in 1781 requires deeper analysis, but there is no question that the map represents an important piece of evidence in the understanding of the native peoples. ♦

John Jackson is an independent scholar who lives in Nanaimo, British Columbia. *The author would like to thank Shirlee Anne Smith, former Keeper, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, and Thomas D. Thiessen and W. Raymond Wood for reading and commenting on earlier versions of this study.*

Journey To An Eclipse

By J.E. Kennedy

The circumstances of the total solar ecplise of 1860 initially came to my attention in the mid-1960s. A total eclipse of the sun occurred in Northern Canada on 20 July 1963. As a member of the Dominion Observatory eclipse party, I had an excellent view of this event at an elevation in excess of 30,000 feet while flying across the eclipse path. The Dominion Observatory party had responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of ground-based eclipse parties as well. We were aware that a substantial number of enthusiastic astronomers from Winnipeg, led by Dr. J.N. Scatliff, had travelled by train to northern Manitoba to observe this eclipse.

In an interesting paper entitled "A Study of Two Solar Eclipse Expeditions in Manitoba", Dr. Scatliff made reference to the American Eclipse Expedition of 1860 which had visited the same general area of northern Manitoba as had his party in 1963. He included two figures taken from a nineteenth century book, *The Winnipeg Country*, written by Samuel H. Scudder, the naturalist on the 1860 eclipse expedition. This book was prepared for publication about twenty-five years after the eclipse had occurred. One print was of a stage-coach, completely bogged down in a slough; the other showed two astronomers viewing the eclipse through telescopes. A third person, presumably the naturalist, was seated on a box, which may have contained cans of alcohol, and with the aid of a chronometer was beating out seconds. In the artist's drawing of this event the astronomer seated on the left had much the same appearance as the astronomer on the right. No indication was given in Scudder's book as to the identity of either astronomer.

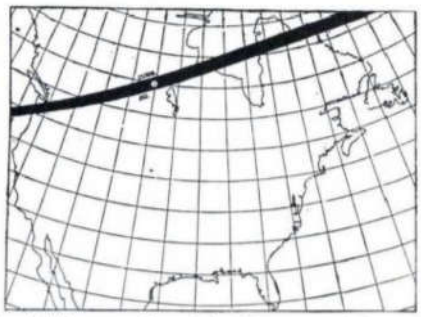
While assembling material for a paper on "Contributions of Canadian Astronomers to Solar Eclipse Expeditions," an item was located in a book by Simon Newcomb entitled *Reminiscences of an Astronomer*. He referred to the 1860 solar eclipse in British America. The question thus arose — was this Canadian-born astronomer a member of the eclipse party which travelled to northern Canada in 1860? While I was aware of the tremendous scientific achievements of Newcomb, eclipse-chasing had not been one of them.

At this stage it was indeed fortunate that I was invited to participate in the opening ceremonies of the observatory at Priddis, located a few miles south of Calgary, Alberta. There I met a senior scientist from the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C. I enquired of him whether Newcomb had been involved in the 1860 eclipse expedition to northern Canada. A short time later I received from the Librarian of the U.S. Naval Observatory a copy of a map showing the eclipse path across northern Canada — a map which had been drawn by Simon Newcomb in 1860 when he was an assistant in the U.S. Nautical Almanac Office, then located in Boston, Massachusetts. The identification of one of the astronomers shown in the artist's drawing was now quite definite. Newcomb was either the one on the left or on the right. The identity of the other astronomer came some time later. He turned out to be Professor William Ferrel.

The Hudson's Bay Company became involved in this scientific venture because the territory into which the party wanted to travel was under the control of its Governor, Sir George Simpson. An extract from his reply to the request of Commander Davis of the U.S. Nautical Almanac Office stated:

> I have the honour to acknowledge your letter . . . informing me of your wish to send a small party of scientific gentlemen to Cumberland House . . . to observe the total eclipse of the sun in July next.
>
> I have to state that the Company are always desirous of rendering their assistance to any such undertaking as that you propose, having for its object the promotion of the interests of science.
>
> I would recommend that your party should proceed to Fort Garry . . . via Saint Paul, Minnesota . . . . There arrangements might be made for procuring a conveyance to Cumberland . . . the party might count on the ready and efficient advice and assistance of Mr. William Mactavish.

A microfilm copy of Simon Newcomb's Diary covering the months of May to September 1860 has recently been acquired. The information therein contained is a most valuable supplement to the available archival material. The trip by train and steamer from Boston to St. Paul was relatively uneventful. At St. Paul



The "eclipse belt" passes above Lake Winnipeg and through Hudson Bay. From Samuel Scudder's "The Winnipeg Country", Boston, 1886.

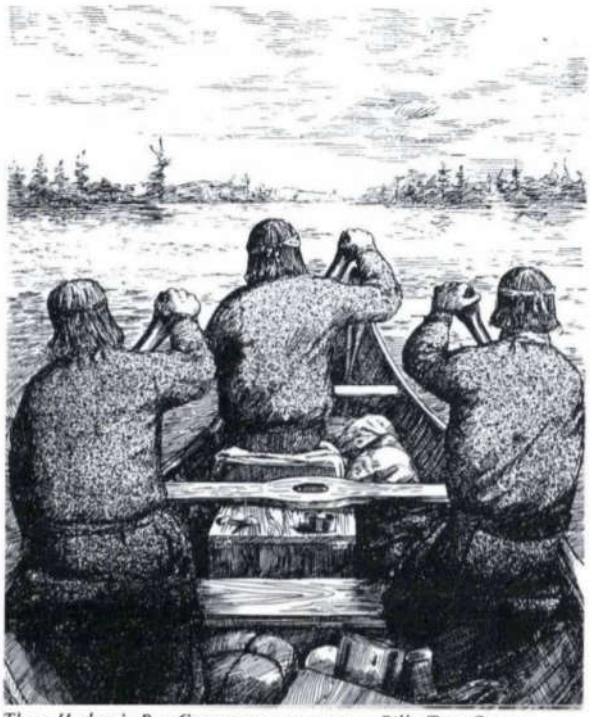
Newcomb was warned of possible delays in crossing Lake Winnipeg by canoe as a result of storms, a situation the party soon was to encounter, making it very difficult to reach the eclipse path in time for the event.

The hardships of travelling from St. Paul to Fort Garry by stage-coach and steamer must have diminished the enthusiasm of the scientists. Along this part of the route, overnight accommodation was primitive; meals at the various stations were not sumptuous, consisting of salt pork and raw-bread with potatoes. A newspaper correspondent, the Rev. Edward Eggleston, had joined the group in St. Paul and accompanied them as far as Fort Garry. His accounts of the journey were sent back and published in the *Minnesotian*. These contain a clear indication of living conditions:

> Mr. Ferrel asserts that the sextant is of no use in this country, as he can tell the exact longitude of a place by the coffee — that article growing weaker as you proceed westward.

A novel method thus appeared in Eggleston's reports for the determination of longitude, the more difficult co-ordinate by far to measure in locating the party's position while crossing the western plains.

As promised, arrangements were made by William Mactavish at Fort Garry for a canoe, a guide and paddlers, and provisions. The vehicle he supplied for transporting the party to its destination near Cumberland House was the Great North Canoe of Sir George Simpson, possibly the Cadillac of these conveyances. After only four miles of travel a prolonged stop was necessary to repair the leaky canoe. Lake Winnipeg was reached on 29 June and two weeks later the lake had been navigated and the mouth of the Saskatchewan River reached. The flood level of the river slowed the party's progress considerably and on the evening of 17 July, after 36 hours of non-stop paddling by an exhausted crew, a site was selected for



Three Hudson's Bay Company canoe men — Billy Tate, George Whitford and Francis Sinclair — in the great canoe of Sir George Simpson on the journey north. From "The Winnipeg Country".

viewing the total eclipse of the sun early the following morning. The group barely had reached the outer edge of the path of totality. The ground selected as an observing site was level with the water but still the best location that could be found.

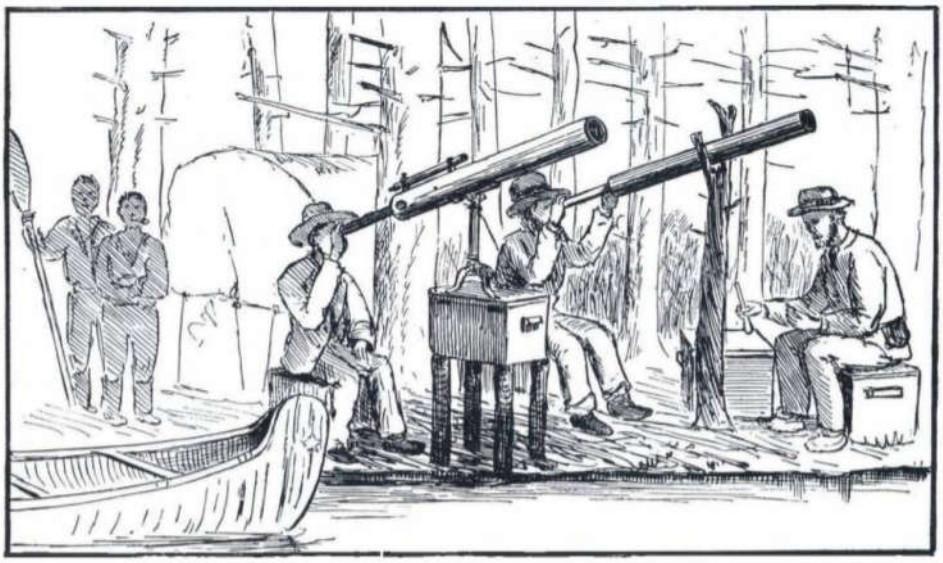
At totality the weather was cloudy, a grave disappointment for all members of the party after the hardships suffered from the elements and the mosquitoes in making this trip. Naturalist Scudder expressed a rather frustrated point of view:

> Three thousand miles of constant travel, occupying five weeks to reach by heroic endeavour the outer edge of the belt of totality; to sit in a marsh, and view the eclipse through the clouds.

Astronomer Newcomb was more philosophical in outlook:

> A sense of relief accompanies the disappointment. You are not responsible for the mishap; perhaps something would have broken down when you were making your observations so that they would have failed in the best of weather; but now you are relieved from all responsibility. It was much easier to go back and tell of the clouds than it would have been to say that the telescope got disarranged at the critical moment so that the observations failed.

That afternoon the party pushed on a few more miles to the mission at Le Pas, where it was afforded an



The scientists observe the eclipse, 1860. From "The Winnipeg Country".

Title page from a copy of Samuel Scudder's 1886 edition of "The Winnipeg Country".

THE

WINNIPEG COUNTRY

OR

Roughing it with an Eclipse Party

BY

A. ROCHESTER FELLOW

With Thirty-two Illustrations and a Map

BOSTON
CUPPLES, UPHAM, & COMPANY
The Old Corner Bookstore
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1886

extremely warm welcome and an enjoyable cup of tea. The return trip to Fort Garry began the following day. It was no surprise that adverse weather conditions again were encountered on Lake Winnipeg. Provisions ran low and eventually were completely depleted. Another party, a group of missionaries travelling north, generously shared their supplies with Newcomb's party. Lower Fort Garry was reached on 8 August. At Upper Fort Garry another bitter disappointment awaited the group.

A few weeks earlier the party had proceeded north on the Red River from Georgetown to Upper Fort Garry in the comfort (if such a term was applicable) of the steamer *Anson Northup*. Looking forward to retracing this route on the return journey to St. Paul, the party was dismayed to discover that the steamer was aground owing to the low water level of the Red River. Should no heavy rains be forthcoming, it might well be 1861 before it could be refloated. The unpleasant decision was taken to proceed by wagon-train to St. Paul. With all of these unexpected delays, the eclipse party arrived at its home base in Boston on 19 September. Ferrel, Scudder and Newcomb had survived a lengthy and harrowing experience in the wilds.

It may well have been a surprise to Newcomb to discover a flourishing newspaper in Fort Garry, *The Nor'Wester*, operated by two excellent reporters, William Coldwell and William Buckingham. The total solar eclipse of 1860 was possibly the most important scientific event covered by this paper in the decade of its existence.

The newspaper reports of this expedition have proved most useful as sources of scientific data related to

A pause for lunch on the prairie on the journey home. From "The Winnipeg Country".

this eclipse. The objectives were outlined in the *Minnesotian* of 16 June as follows:

(i) to determine the origin of the protuberances seen at the time of a total eclipse;

(ii) to investigate the subject of the polarization of light; and

(iii) to seek for inter-mercurial planets.

Sun, moon, swoon

Eclipse is a term borrowed from the medical profession where it means a "faint" or a "swoon". In astronomy an eclipse occurs when one celestial body passes between the observer and another celestial body. This leads to an obscuration, a dimming or darkening, of the first celestial body in some instances hiding it entirely from the observer's view.

The conditions necessary for a total solar eclipse are as follows:

(i) the sun is luminous, while the earth and moon are non-luminous or opaque. To an observer on the earth, the sun and moon are of the same apparent size. Hence the moon's disc can cover the sun's disc;

(ii) the moon goes round the earth each month. If the moon passed directly between the sun and the earth, a monthly eclipse would occur. The apparent orbits of the sun and the moon are inclined to each other by approximately 5½°;

(iii) the moon must be in the "new" phase and the sun and the moon must be at or near one of the two points of intersection (nodes) of their apparent orbits; and

(iv) the path of totality on the earth's surface is not wide. To observe a total solar eclipse, the observer must be stationed within this path. The duration of totality is quite short as the moon's shadow moves quickly along the earth's surface.

In *The Nor'Wester* of 28 June 1860 a significant reference appeared on the difficulty of determining longitude in the nineteenth century, showing that a solar eclipse provided a means of accomplishing this:

> Should it [the eclipse] be successfully observed both at Cumberland and at other observatories on the continent, a means will be furnished to determine the longitude of the former station with greater accuracy than any which have been hitherto available.
>
> The eclipse will be total at Cumberland a little over two minutes. But observations on the accompanying phenomena of the extension of the shadow over the sun's disc — its gradual wearing off — and the appearance of Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and perhaps a fourth planet — will probably occupy the party a couple of hours . . . .

It appears Simon Newcomb may have planned to edit and publish his diary of this solar eclipse expedition upon his return to Boston. To date no record has been located which would show that his intent was carried out. Publication of Newcomb's diary — the highlights of his travels to northern Canada in 1860 — should be undertaken as it would provide a most useful supplement to the account presented in 1886 by S.H. Scudder in *The Winnipeg Country*. ♦

Based on a paper presented at the 1990 Colloquium of The Rupert's Land Research Centre, held at Stromness in the Orkney Islands, by J.E. Kennedy, Professor Emeritus, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

New Women, Old Problems

By Anne Morton

NEW WOMEN FOR GOD
Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914

By Ruth Compton Brouwer. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1990. 294 pp., illus. $50.00 cloth; $18.95 paper.

THE NATURE OF THEIR BODIES
Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada

By Wendy Mitchinson. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991. 474 pp., illus. $60.00 cloth; $22.95 paper.

Whatever we may think of them now, missionaries used to be held in high esteem. Canadian women could thrill to the tales of their adventurous yet pious lives offered in such publications as the Presbyterian Church's *Foreign Missionary Tidings* or *With the Tibetans in Tent and Temple*, an autobiographical account by Dr. Susie Carson Rijnhart, formerly of Strathroy, Ontario.

Missionaries were even romantic enough for Anne Shirley, as her conversation with Marilla, quoted in part by Brouwer, makes clear:

> . . . next week we are to write a composition on some remarkable person. It's hard to choose among so many remarkable people who have lived. Mustn't it be splendid to be remarkable and have compositions written about you when you're dead? Oh, I would dearly love to be remarkable. I think when I grow up I'll be a trained nurse and go with the Red Crosses to the field of battle as a messenger of mercy. That is, if I don't go out as a foreign missionary. That would be very romantic, but one would have to be very good to be a missionary, and that would be a stumbling block. (*Anne of Green Gables*).

As Anne realizes, while in full conversational spate, the life of a missionary offered freedom (a woman could be "remarkable" and "romantic"), yet it also required constraint (a woman had to be "very good."). It is just this paradox that makes women missionaries interesting to women's historians such as Brouwer. As she writes in her introduction:

> . . . women encountered in the foreign missionary movement a paradoxical pattern of opportunities and constraints even as they brought to it their own competing desires: for autonomy and personal fulfillment on the one hand, for assurance of divine approbation and social acceptance on the other. A knowledge of their experience can add to our understanding of woman's place in Victorian and Edwardian Canada.

Brouwer's book is an account of the women missionaries who went to Central India under the banner of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, Western Division (WFMS) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Toronto-based WFMS was established in 1876 and was merged in 1914 with the Women's Home Missionary Society. The knowledge of the woman missionaries' experience that Brouwer gives us helps us to understand how much and how little their work in India gave them — and how much and how little their society was willing to give all women.

The "much" they received could be riches indeed. For example:

> Dr. Marion Oliver could sit mutely by at the "At Home" held prior to her departure for India in 1886, allowing her minister to respond on her behalf after William McLaren had presented her with a Bible as a gift of the WFMS. . . . Some five years after . . . Dr Oliver was standing before Indian and Canadian fellow-workers in the mission's new hospital and delivering a speech of welcome to the wife of the viceroy. In the interval, she had acquired a new language, come to know at least two princely families, learned to practise medicine under new and challenging conditions, and played a vigorous part in the mission's political battles. The distance she had travelled since leaving Canada was more than could be measured in miles.

The Presbyterian Church, however, did not send women to India so that they could lead rich and fulfilling lives. They sent them because, wishing to bring the good news of Christ to Indian men and women

both, they required missionaries who could penetrate the *zenana*. *Zenana* is the Hindi word for that part of the house in which high-caste women are kept secluded. In fact, women in Central India were not as rigorously sequestered as they perhaps were in other parts of the country and, in any case, the woman missionaries spent much of their time in hospitals, schools and orphanages rather than *zenana* visiting. Yet the *zenana* — and the effect that contemplation of its Oriental mystery had on the minds of the folks back home — was still an excellent way to encourage the presence of the woman missionaries.

If the idea of a single woman making a career for herself in a foreign land still seemed unconventional, it could be made acceptable through being presented as an extension of woman's true role. As J.K. Macdonald wrote in an 1888 issue of *Knox College Monthly:*

> Here is a sphere less injurious to true womanhood than many into which women are clamouring for admission, more in harmony with her better nature and God's evident designs, in which her own long pent-up energies and powers may find full scope to her own advantage and the immeasurable blessing of humanity.

A woman missionary might be unmarried, childless, educated, living in Indore rather than Fenelon Falls but she was nonetheless performing traditional womanly tasks — raising children, healing the sick, providing moral and spiritual uplift.

If women were carried away by their new life in India to the point of being unacceptably assertive and ambitious, the church knew how to deal with them. They were fired. This is what happened to Mary McGregor and Marion Fairweather, despite the fact that Fairweather had been one of the mission's founders. The WFMS was a hugely successful wing of the Presbyterian Church, yet its merger with the Women's Home Missionary Society took place against the will of its members. It was the male Foreign Missions Committee which wanted the merger and the WFMS had no real power with which to prevent it. Brouwer even devotes an entire and depressing chapter, "Gender Politics in a Mission", to the struggles of the men and women in the field to find a mutually satisfactory way of running their affairs and sharing power. The eventual solution, painfully arrived at, was to yield to the men the larger share of control.

Like its subject, the effect of *New Women for God* is paradoxical. It is hard not to feel comforted and inspired by the lives of the woman missionaries but it is also hard not to feel that their apparent freedom was no more than a larger prison. And the name of that prison was "true womanhood".

"True womanhood" is a cultural concept. One of the Victorian pillars of that concept is the subject of *The Nature of Their Bodies*. The title is painfully ironic, for Mitchinson writes not about what the bodies of women were like but about what Victorian doctors thought they were like and the effect their ideas had on women's social role.

The book's origins lie in Mitchinson's interest in "the ideology of domesticity. . . . The perception of women as wives, mothers and homemakers". Sustaining this perception was "a belief in the fundamental differences between the two sexes — emotional, psychological, intellectual and physical". Investigating the physical differences which were thought to be so important, Mitchinson decided to go straight to the horse's mouth and, by reading her way through medical journals, medical textbooks, popular health manuals and patient records, find out what doctors, the experts on the body, had to say.

She found that what doctors had to say was, for the most part, determined by what their society believed. This is not surprising nor especially blameworthy. Yet it was alarming because what doctors thought about women, as about an increasingly large number of topics, began to matter immensely. It was during the Victorian age that people started to take the medical profession seriously. Doctors, after all, were less likely to kill you than they had been in the past. It was not just that their hands were well-washed but that their brains were stocked with modern, scientific knowledge and the Victorians were pushovers for the modern and the scientific. Medicine, like the rest of civilization, was advancing to a state of glorious perfection.

Yet if the scientific approach requires an impartial observer, the approach doctors took to women's bodies was too often unscientific. They saw what they wanted to see and the result was the same old tosh.

Women's bodies were viewed as deviations from the norm. The norm — alas and of course — was the male body. The ways in which women's bodies differed from those of men, but not the ways in which men's bodies differed from those of women, were seen as weird and odd. They were also seen as crucial.

Now, one might think that the similarities between the bodies of men and women, as indeed between the human body and the bodies of other mammals, are both greater in

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number and fundamentally more important, than the differences. We might not be very happy at the thought of parting with our reproductive organs but if given the choice between losing them or our livers, how crucial then would we think our reproductive systems?

Victorian doctors saw the differences in reproductive systems as crucial because in so doing they justified their society's views on the proper role of women. And so we get pronouncements such as "Woman exists for the sake of the womb." This small organ was seen as all-powerful. It was considered to affect the other organs of the body. Indeed, if a woman's reproductive system went wrong, as it seemed dismayingly prone to do, it could even affect her mental health. Dr. Richard Bucke of the London Asylum took this view to its logical extreme when he practised gynaecological surgery on mentally ill women. (He was able to prove, to his own satisfaction at least, that his surgical cures worked.) Dominated by the mighty uterus, how could women hope to do more than give in to it and the domestic agenda it so imperiously demanded?

If a woman did rebel by deciding to have no children or fewer children than God sent (as the phrase has it), it was not a decision in which doctors were likely to encourage her. Not to have children, they believed, was bad for a woman's health.

A lot of things could be "scientifically proved" to be bad for a woman's health. More education than was deemed appropriate, for example. It was considered to divert necessary energy from the reproductive system to the brain and the consequences could be fearful for both. And why should women bother anyway, since their reproductive systems made them intellectually inferior to men:

> . . . evolutionary development . . . slowed, if not ceased, at puberty and, because women reached puberty at a younger age than men, women's position on the evolutionary ladder was lower than man's. When it is remembered that the intellect was the last to evolve, the relative intellectual inferiority of women to men appeared to have a scientific basis. But perhaps Nature knew best for, as George Napheys made clear, a young girl's focus shifted from concern about herself as an individual to her "peculiar obligations . . . to the whole race." She, as an individual, ceased to be important; rather her destiny as a childbearer became paramount.

Even those who believed that childbearing was natural and therefore healthy and good could not help but notice that it was conspicuously, even all too often, fatally harmful. Doctors had an explanation for this, however. The stress and strain of civilization had made it difficult for women to be as natural as they once had been. They should not worry, though, for civilization had also given them the recourse to wonderful medical care.

The Nature of Their Bodies is a devastatingly well-argued account of an ideology which sought to make women's bodies into a jail and a jailer both. One has to remind oneself that while an ideology can play an important role in the lives of individuals it does not live their lives for them. Women had ways of understanding and living in their bodies that were not always what the doctor ordered.

Anne Morton is the Prairie and N.W.T. Representative to the Canadian Committee on Women's History.

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A Dangerous Undertaking

By J.M. Bumsted

THE JUNIOR ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CANADA

James H. Marsh, Editor-in-chief. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1990. Five volumes, illus. $99.00.

Readers of the daily press will probably recall this work as the one that brought down the House of Hurtig, Canada's largest English-language publisher outside Toronto. The problem was, according to newspaper reports, an inability to sell sufficient copies quickly enough of a substantial print run in excess of 100,000, leading to a cash-flow crisis which produced "restructuring" and eventually the sale of the company to McClelland and Stewart of Toronto. Thus did Canada's two most vociferously "nationalistic" publishers join forces. From Hurtig's perspective, this review comes after the wake. It is virtually impossible now to assess this project, however, apart from the debacle it produced, without wondering whether the game was worth the candle.

The concept of publishing Canadian encyclopedias was not invented by Mel Hurtig. For many years the Grolier Society of Canada had a virtual lock on the enterprise with its *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, conceived in the 1940s, actually begun in 1952, and completed in 1957. This work required 800 contributors of manuscripts, behind which stood a virtual army of informants. Its chief editorial consultant was the Dominion Archivist and National Librarian, W. Kaye Lamb, a historian by training, and another historian, W.L. Morton, was one of its regional advisors, presumably for the Prairies. Given both its advisors and the state of Canadian culture at the time of preparation, it is hardly surprising that the *Encyclopedia Canadiana* was rooted firmly in Canadian history, geography, and politics, with only occasional glimpses into other realms. Neither science nor popular culture received much coverage in the first edition, which featured slightly out-of-date black-and-white photographs and was written in a tone of earnest national pride characteristic of the age. Revisions to the *Encyclopedia Canadiana* never could eliminate its feel of being somehow behind the times, both in its coverage and in its tone. Moreover, its many-volumed format turned it into a reference work to be found in libraries but seldom in the home, and Grolier did not keep it up-to-date. Certainly by

1979, when the Alberta government made a grant to Hurtig Publishers to begin work on a new encyclopedia of modern Canada, it was clear that there was a need for such a work. Whether there was a market was another matter.

In theory the market certainly existed. Every Canadian family that felt it needed an encyclopedia on its bookshelves really required two: one of so-called "international" dimensions and another dealing with Canadian material that would not be included in the former. No encyclopedia has a truly international perspective, of course, but bears distinct signs in its coverage of its country (or in the modern world of publishing, countries) of origin. What is true of all universal encyclopedias is that Canadian information will be thin on the ground. The market, therefore, was potentially substantial, particularly if the work produced could be sold at a price that did not make it seem like a major investment in knowledge, such as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* had always represented. Hurtig succeeded in its marketing of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, fairly rapidly selling out the first edition and quickly moving to a revision. The work was simultaneously a popular and a critical success, with reviewers almost universally enthusiastic.

The same people who brought us *The Canadian Encyclopedia* in 1985 offered *The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada* in 1990. Its appearance immediately posed a number of questions, even before "restructuring": did *The Junior Encyclopedia* offer something not available in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*? Did it offer something not better served by collecting annual reference books? Did the potential users (especially the kids) like it? Behind these questions lurked the really big one: would Canadian parents shell out for a five-volume boxed set of Canadian encyclopedias ostensibly designed for their children? As we shall see, labelling the product a "junior encyclopedia" may have been part of its problem.

Comparisons between *The Junior Encyclopedia* and its parent *The Canadian Encyclopedia* are inevitable. They certainly look different. Senior came in pages of small three-columned type and equally tiny illustrations — the graphics were a bit larger — often in washed-out colour, bound in solid-colour cloth. Junior comes in pages of much larger three-columned type, with many more illustrations (in brighter colour and less frequently muddy) and a good deal of new colour graphics. Covers are in technicolour. Although volume size is the same, Junior has about half the total number of pages per volume and thicker paper. Curiously, Senior paginated continuously, while Junior does each volume separately,

perhaps seeking not to frighten potential researchers of term papers with four-digit numbers in their obligatory footnotes.

The difference in coverage between the two productions goes far beyond mere elimination of some entries and simplification of others. The entry on "Culture" in Junior, while substantially shorter, does a much better job of capturing modern nuances, perhaps because it has not been produced from a French-Canadian perspective. On the other hand, there is in Junior no entry on "Racism". There are some entries in Junior not present in Senior, such as the one on "Aids". The entry adjacent in Junior on "Aid to (or of) the Civil Power" — a fairly esoteric and idiosyncratic one — is much shorter than the one in Senior. But its very presence suggests reliance on the earlier model despite editorial disclaimers to the contrary. A comparison of Senior's entry on Lord Selkirk (which this reviewer wrote) with the one in Junior suggests strongly that somebody basically rewrote the original in simpler language — interested readers can make the comparison for themselves on this and many other entries. Both Selkirk entries use the same hackneyed portrait, credited to the National Archives of Canada and not to the original artist. Unlike Senior, which included no bibliography for the Selkirk entry, Junior does include "Suggested Reading", although the works it recommends are hardly the most recent available.

The relationship of the entries between Senior and Junior is a sensitive and important one in several ways. Not only did the editors insist that they had begun *de novo* to avoid invidious comparisons, but they did not credit (or pay) the same contributors. The real question was whether buyers could be persuaded that this product represented something they did not already possess in an earlier version. Certainly many entries in Junior have not been contracted or derived from Senior. Those dealing with Canadian popular culture, for example, have received much more extensive coverage, and some, particularly those dealing with kids' culture, appear for the first time. Thus writers Robert Munsch (*The Paperback Princess*) and Leslie McFarlane (aka Franklin W. Dixon and Carolyn Keene) appear for the first time in Junior. Coverage in Junior is just as erratic as in Senior, however, particularly on children's culture, where one would have expected strength. Despite the importance of Canadian children's music performers (and recordings) — they are probably our only distinctive contribution to popular music — there are no separate entries for Eric Nagler, or Sharon, Lois and Bram, or Fred Penner, or Heather Bishop, although some of these are catalogued in the entry on "Popular Music", which is quite sympathetically written and makes better sense than the one in Senior. Nor are there separate entries for "Mister Dressup" or "The Friendly Giant", both certainly classics familiar to generations of Canadian kids. Indeed, Canadian children's television has been almost entirely overlooked, in the article on "television" and in independent entries.

While the reactions of a handful of children are not necessarily typical, those kids whom I consulted found the product attractive and interesting. At the same time, they had some difficulty in understanding why there was no entry for "Sesame Street", particularly since it appeared every weekday on CBC. There are several possible explanations for such an omission, ranging from the neglect of kids' television to the targeted age of the prospective reader (older) to the absence of Canadian content, but none of them made any sense to my young consumers. In some senses, the absence of Sesame Street is symptomatic of one of the major problems of a Canadian encyclopedia for children produced by adults employing adult thinking — and perhaps one of the major problems of Canada as well. A Canadian reference work for kids that cannot come to terms with Sesame Street (or Disney World, or Hollywood) is obviously in serious trouble.

At the same time, one cannot help suspecting that it may have been a mistake to label this product a "junior encyclopedia". It is certainly shorter, glitzier, and less complexly written than the first Hurtig encyclopedia. And it contains more information for kids. But the younger set have always been prime users of encyclopedias, and this one arguably deserved to be treated as a new and improved adult version rather than as junior. While it is probably not the case that there is no overlap between Senior and Junior, this reviewer found Junior on balance to be surprisingly good value for money, probably a more satisfactory package than its elder relation. Had Hurtig produced Junior first, it would doubtless have had little trouble in shifting the 100,000 copies that it printed. For those adults who are prepared to take their reference works frozen at a given point in time (somewhere in 1989, one suspects, for this edition), *The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada* is essential, despite its somewhat misleading title. A fair number of copies appear still to be available.

J.M. Bumsted is Professor of History at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

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Pattullo in Living Colour

By Allan Levine

DUFF PATTULLO OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Robin Fisher. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1991. 445 pp., illus. $40.00.

Two snapshots of Thomas Dufferin Pattullo, the Premier of British Columbia from 1933 to 1941, stand out in Canadian history. One is of "Duff the Dictator", who in his concerted effort to solve the Great Depression sought to bypass his legislature and the democratic process with an act that placed "extraordinary and sweeping powers" in the premier's office; and the other is of "Duff the Decentralizer", who stood with those two other enemies of a "strong" Canada in 1941, Mitchell Hepburn of Ontario and William Aberhart of Alberta, to thwart Prime Minister Mackenzie King's plans to alter the country along the lines recommended by the Rowell-Sirois Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations.

History is rarely so black and white and the political career of Duff Pattullo is a good case in point. As portrayed by historian Robin Fisher of Simon Fraser University, Pattullo's motives and actions were much more complex than has been acknowledged by scholars "immersed in the Ottawa sources". Making use of rich archival material on the West Coast and elsewhere, Fisher has written a first-rate, though somewhat tedious political biography. There are, it seems, excessive details on just about every piece of correspondence Pattullo ever wrote or received and every legislative debate he participated in. While impeccably researched, the book lacks a sense of drama.

Part of the problem is obviously Fisher's choice of subject. Pattullo was remarkable in that he persevered against considerable setbacks throughout his life to establish a formidable career in provincial politics. But tales of working as a clerk in a gold office or administering the B.C. Land Department hardly make for fascinating or exciting reading. As the history of a province from the perspective of one of its key figures, *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia* is a significant study. But biographies of Canadian premiers — Duplessis, Aberhart and perhaps Hepburn might be exceptions — are usually stories of failed attempts and lost opportunities caused principally by a shortage of power. Fisher chronicles a similar story here.

For a good portion of his life, Pattullo was, in fact, a failure. As a young man in a rush, he had set out from his family's homestead in rural Ontario in the 1890s in search of his fortune. And though he had a great deal of determination, he struggled for decades to make it on his own. He settled in the frontier town of Prince Rupert, B.C. in 1908 with his wife and daughter, intent on becoming a financial success. Not an astute businessman, Pattullo invested unwisely in B.C. property and spent much of his life trying to get out of debt.

He was slightly more promising as a budding local politician. He was elected to Prince Rupert's city council in 1910 at age 37, and three years later was the town's mayor. As was the case with many of Duff Pattullo's grandiose plans, then and later, insufficient funds impeded any chance of instituting the real changes he had in mind. Prince Rupert's finances were in as much a "chaotic state" as Pattullo's and a trip around the world in 1913 raised no new capital. He was defeated in the next election. Not one to surrender easily, he eventually found his niche as a Liberal in the B.C. legislature where he served with distinction from 1916 to 1945. He earned his political stripes as an orator and competent manager as Minister of Lands in the Liberal administrations that governed B.C. during the twenties. An avid golfer and stylish dresser, Duff, writes Fisher, always looked "cool whatever the political temperature."

After more than a decade of less than satisfactory government, the B.C. Liberals, divided themselves, were defeated by Simon Tolmie and the Conservatives in the 1928 election. Soon after, Pattullo, one of the few Grits to hold his seat, became the party's leader. For five years, he worked harder than he ever had, reorganizing the party, speaking to crowds throughout the province and waiting patiently for the Tories to self-destruct under the burden of the economic crisis of the early 1930s. In November 1933, 60-year-old Duff Pattullo became B.C.'s new premier.

Pattullo had some grand ideas on how to save the province. His political creed was "to move forward". At his father's knee, he had been exposed to the practical philosophy of Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat, one of the first Canadian leaders to argue that the state had a more active role to play in society. These past lessons, together with the example of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" which had greatly impressed Pattullo, encouraged the new premier to forge ahead with his own progressive reforms.

"Pattullo was an individualist who believed in private property," Fisher explains, "but he believed equally strongly that the state had to act as the mediator among individuals." This was not a cry for socialism; Pattullo did not favour the theories of the year-old CCF; rather he advocated a form of "socialized capitalism" in which the provincial state would "move beyond the frontier concerns of roads, bridges, and patronage" to deal effectively with a higher level of social and economic development. Pattullo's ideas had only one major obstacle: a lack of money.

FDR's New Deal worked because the American president had the power and resources to implement innovative unemployment relief and health programs. Duff Pattullo had no alternative but to beg for the necessary funds from the federal government far off in Ottawa. And in the eyes of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and his cautious Conservative colleagues, the B.C. premier's economic solutions bordered on communism. Little real capital was forthcoming and in any event, Pattullo would never have surrendered the fiscal control demanded by Bennett in exchange for more federal dollars.

The situation was no better when Mackenzie King was returned to power in 1935. The fastidious Liberal leader had always been suspicious of Pattullo, a man, unlike himself, who knew how to have a good time at a party. Beyond that, King had his own views and agenda about the country's direction and it differed sharply from Pattullo's B.C. policies as was made clear when the two politicians clashed at the 1941 Dominion-Provincial Conference. Pattullo argued that Canada consisted of five main regions and if the country was to remain united and strong it was essential that this reality be recognized. Mackenzie King and much of the press thought otherwise. Given today's constitutional debates, Pattullo was clearly a premier ahead of his time.

Residents of British Columbia were told then and now that they were different, that geography and climate had contributed to the development of a "distinct society" on the West Coast — no different than the situation in the East. Certainly Pattullo, a transplanted Ontarian, believed this. "We are an empire in ourselves and our hills and valleys are stored with potential wealth which make us one of the greatest assets of our Dominion," he once said. It is a view to which Robin Fisher subscribes as well, and throughout the book he attempts to understand Pattullo as a man shaped by his environment. Still, while the basic facts may be indeed unique to life in B.C., the story of Duff Pattullo's tortured rise to power and premiership is all too familiar in the annals of Canadian political history.

Allan Levine is a Winnipeg historian and writer.

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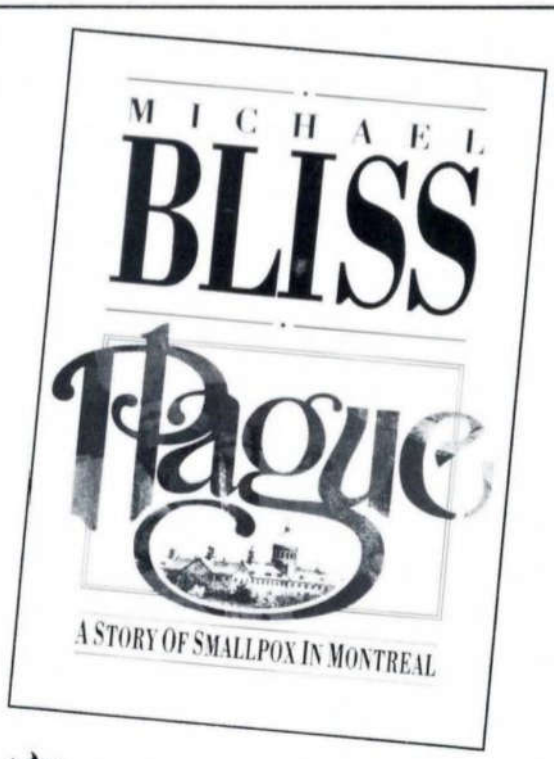

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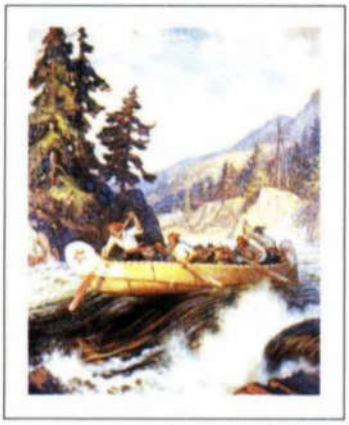

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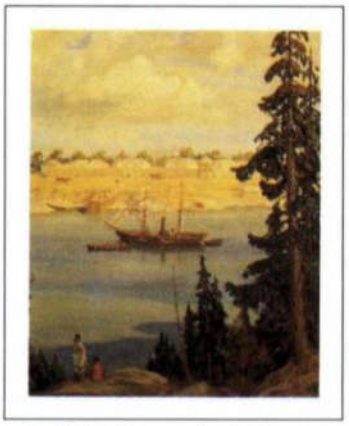

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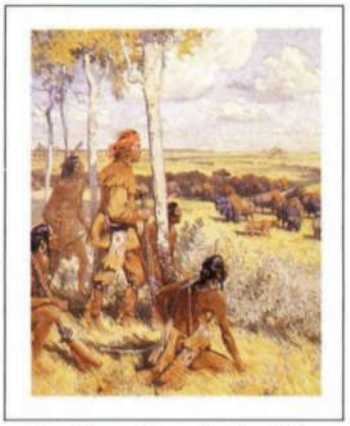

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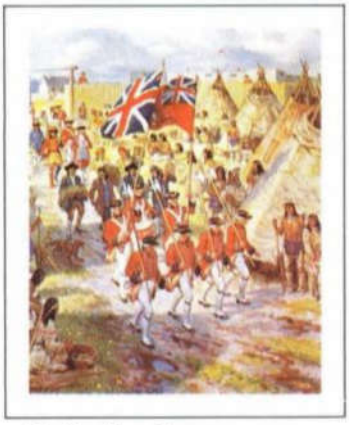

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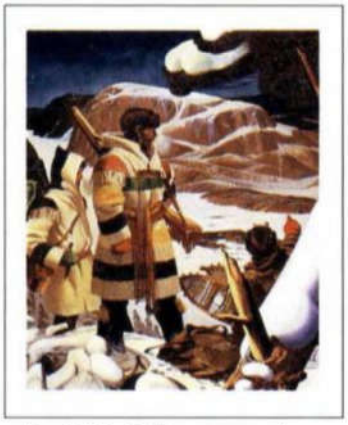

E. *R.M. Ballantyne and Chief Trader George Barnston at Tadoussac, 1846*
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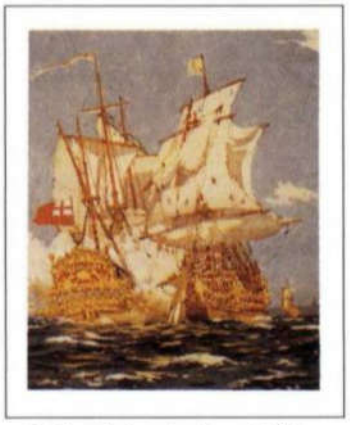

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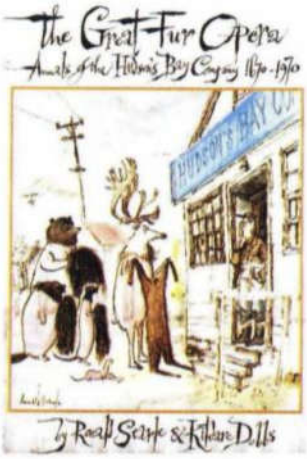

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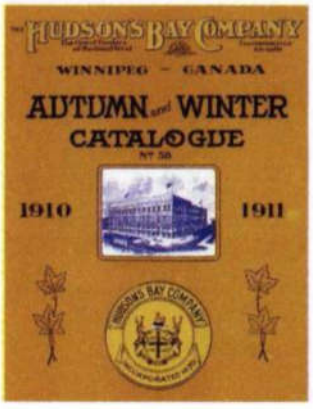

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Richard Jordan: Toronto's French Heritage

Toronto traces its official origin to a day in July 1793 when John Graves Simcoe sailed into the harbour to found the town of York.

Coming out from shore that day to pilot Simcoe's schooner was a lesser-known founding father, Jean-Baptiste (also known as St. John) Rousseau, who was already living there with his family.

A week before Simcoe's arrival, Rousseau's wife Margaret, the adopted daughter of Mohawk chief Joseph Brant, had been delivered of a baby girl in their cabin overlooking the Humber River — the future city's first recorded birth.

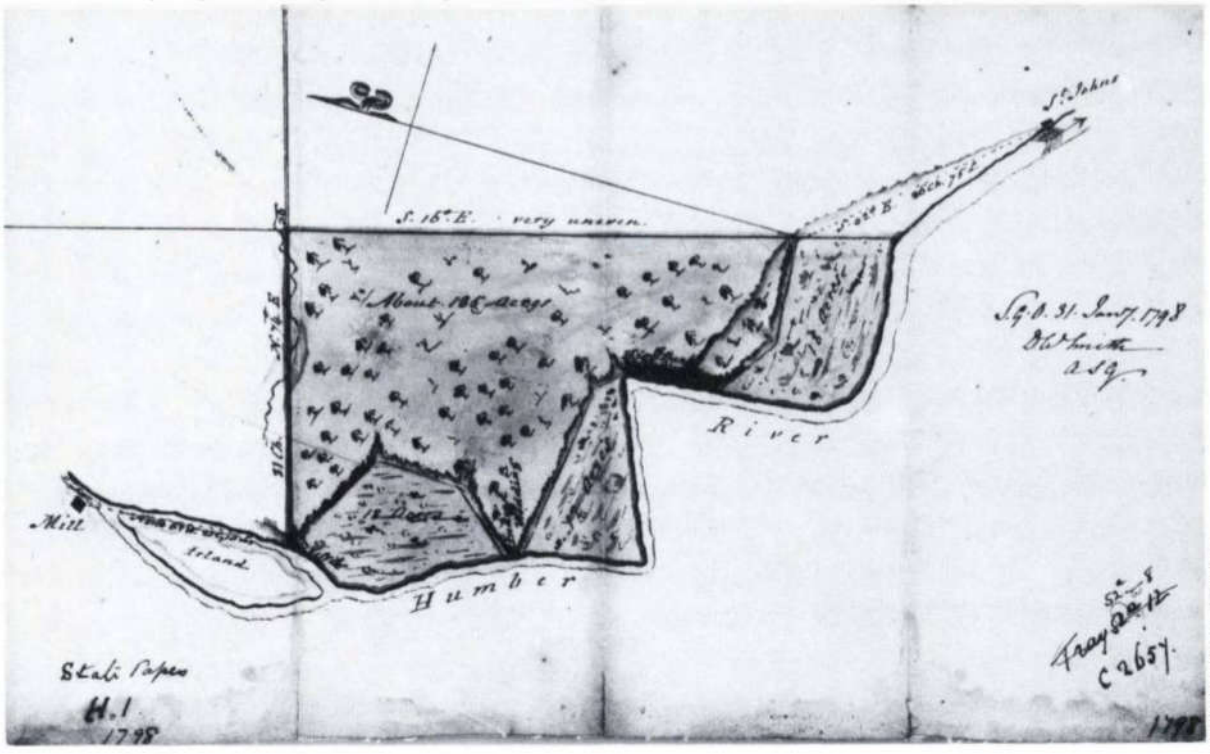
Rousseau had a remarkable life that spanned Canada's change from French to English rule and paralleled the economic transition between fur trade and settlement. Born the son of a *coureur de bois*, he died a merchant-miller with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the York Militia.

The Rousseaus might have remained no more than a footnote in the history of Toronto had it not been for the efforts of *La Société d'histoire de Toronto*, a francophone group formed seven years ago to uncover the city's neglected French heritage.

In 1989, the group had just finished producing a slide show about the family when the Metropolitan Toronto Roads Department announced its intention to build a works yard on the Humber at a spot where an Ontario government plaque marks the site of the Rousseau cabin.

The threat to the site produced an immediate response from all of Toronto's local historical societies. Meeting at the downtown offices of the Community History Project, a number of them combined with *La Société* to incorporate The Rousseau Project/*le Projet Rousseau* with the aim of fully researching the pioneer family and mounting an emergency archaeological excavation if necessary. The group soon gained the support of the descen-

A plan of 1798 showing the location of the Rousseau (St. John) cabin, not far from present-day Bloor Street West.



National Archives of Canada

dants of some of Rousseau's old trading partners, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, and trilingual brochures (English, French and Ojibwa) were printed.

York University doctoral student Sylvie Beaudreau was hired to further research the Rousseaus and a full portrait of this ambitious and successful family began to emerge.

Jean-Baptiste, born in 1758, had grown up in the wilderness with his father, *coureur de bois* Jean-Bonaventure Rousseau, learning about the fur trade and becoming fluent in a number of Indian languages. Only 16 when his father died, Jean-Baptiste took over both the business and his father's work with the British government as an interpreter. The young Rousseau's success as a trader can be judged by the numerous times he turned down opportunities to interpret, although his name is attached to a number of important treaties, including the second Toronto Purchase of 1805. Simcoe wrote that he was "the only person who possesses any great degree of influence with the Mohawks and Mississaugas."

Jean-Baptiste's first wife, Marie, objected to his long absences on trading journeys and the marriage ended with a civil separation agreement.

His second wife, Margaret Clyne, began her life as the daughter of New York state settlers, but she was carried off with her sister in an Indian raid that saw the violent deaths of her parents. The girls' plight came to the attention of Chief Joseph Brant and he accepted them into his household. Family legend has it that when Margaret met Jean-Baptiste for the first time in Cataraqui (Kingston), the language they spoke was Mohawk.

The Rousseaus' Humber River home was ideally suited for trade, located at one end of the Toronto Carrying Place, a portage linking Lake Ontario with Lake Simcoe via the Holland River. On some early maps, the Humber is shown as St. John's Creek, thought to be a reference to Jean-Bonaventure Rousseau's trading activity there.

Simcoe lands at Toronto, 1793. Rousseau and family are missing from this C.W. Jefferys drawing.

There is speculation that the house incorporated part of the second French trading post built at Toronto in 1750 and almost immediately superseded by Fort Rouille on the present-day grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition.

As the only residence in the wilderness north of Lake Ontario, the Rousseaus' home served as an inn to travellers and, in addition to Simcoe, it is said that Frobisher and other North West Company fur traders stayed there.

As settlement began, Rousseau supplied some of the necessities of life to the pioneer farmers of York. A surviving account book in the Archives of Ontario lists some of the goods traded: pork, turnips, sturgeon oil, window glass, chairs, tobacco and rum.

The Rousseaus did not remain in Toronto long after the coming of Simcoe, moving in 1795 to operate a mill in Ancaster, closer to their benefactor Joseph Brant. Jean-Baptiste died of pleurisy while serving with his York Militia regiment soon after the outbreak of the War of 1812, and Margaret died in 1823. Descendants of their six children still live in the Ancaster area.

The immediate problem facing the Rousseau Project was confirming the site of the cabin so that an emergency archaeological dig could be organized. They turned to the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors, where their request came to the attention of William J. Daniels.

Daniels, a surveyor, historical consultant and expert on Toronto's early scientific instrument makers, proved a persistent researcher. Over the course of a year, he was able to assemble a large number of surveys of the area, dating from the 1790s to the present day.

The most promising — and frustrating — was a 1798 plan by Deputy Surveyor William Hambly showing a line with a bearing and distance leading directly to the cabin. Unfortunately, the starting point was the intersection of an unknown lot line and the bottom of a slope that existed at the time of the survey.

Daniels started by determining how much the Humber had been changed by two centuries of human activity and the raging floodwaters of Hurricane Hazel in 1954. By comparing the various surveys over time, he reached the surprising conclusion that the course of the river is virtually the same as it was in the time of the Rousseaus.

Urban development prevented

Daniels from taking direct line-of-sight readings along the two most likely dot lines, but he was able to relate all the significant points to the fixed grid of the Ontario Co-ordinate System. Using a modern surveying instrument known as a total station, which takes distance and elevation readings by shooting a beam of light at a reflector target, Daniels narrowed the cabin's probable location to a radius of 30 feet.

Unexpectedly, the site was far to the north of the proposed works yard. Old surveys and aerial photographs confirmed that it was close to what was one of the few good canoe landings in the area, but modern activity on the bank has covered the site with as much as 30 feet of fill.

The research has produced a few red faces among provincial historians. The Ontario government plaque is on the site of a marsh that was covered with landfill in the early 1950s.

Before mounting a full-scale excavation, the Rousseau Project will have to secure the permission of the land owners and carry out an archaeological feasibility study. Although the cost of a dig would be high, Project members feel that it would be an ideal way to celebrate Toronto's 200th anniversary in 1993.

Project president, Danièle Caloz, says the ultimate goal is a book — perhaps in English, French and Ojibwa — that would give proper credit to one of Toronto's first families.

Toronto writer Richard Jordan is a past-president of the Etobicoke Historical Society.

The Death of Simcoe

I was interested to read Cheryl MacDonald's article on poisoning by arsenic [*The Beaver*, October/November 1991].

I have always suspected John Graves Simcoe died from arsenic poisoning too. (Not, I hasten to add, administered by Mrs. Simcoe who was hundreds of miles away at the time!) In 1806 General Simcoe was appointed Commander-in-Chief in India and set sail for Portugal. He became ill when he arrived at Lisbon on 26 August and his doctors sent him back to England about a month later. He died at Exeter on 26 October.

John Bailey, the Simcoes' coachman, wrote, "I have heard that the sudden illness of General Simcoe was supposed to have been caused by the ship he was on board having been newly painted. I remember one of the servants who went with General Simcoe said that the paint was the cause of his illness, the ship having been newly painted: and we know paint is slow poison. Mrs. Simcoe was as much afraid of paint as she was of a plague."

I quote from John Ross Robertson's translation of John Bailey's memoirs, which he printed at the end of "The diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe" in 1911. Bailey's original memoir was written in a broad Devon dialect, devoid of a single punctuation mark from start to finish.

Hilary Arnold,
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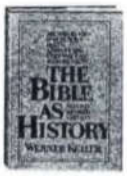

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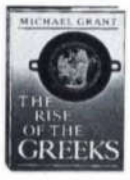

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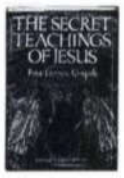

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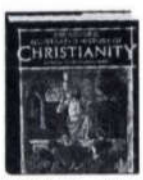

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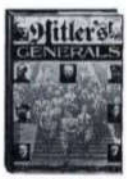

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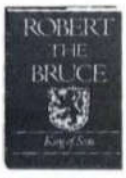

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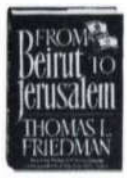

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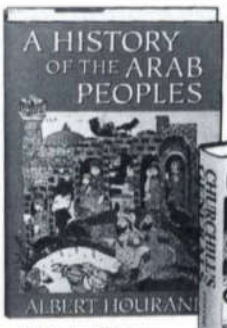

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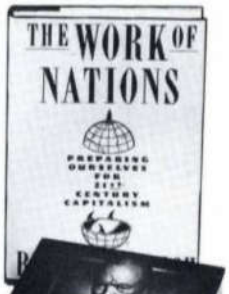

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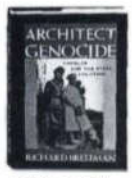

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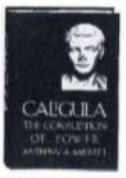

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Fowke on Folk

"My hair almost stood on end!" she says. It has been more than thirty years, but Edith Fowke's delight seems undiminished as she describes the first time she heard O.J. Abbott sing "The Plains of Waterloo." Abbott was an old man by then, and he had spent his life working and singing his way around the farms and lumber camps of the Ottawa Valley. His repertoire of ballads and sea shantys and work songs was immense. As soon as Edith Fowke set up her tape recorder in his home in Hull, Quebec, she knew she had struck a folk music goldmine. In a week, she recorded eighty songs, many never before included in folk-song collections.

Finding O.J. Abbott was a great moment in Edith Fowke's career as a collector of Canadian folklore, but she knew "The Plains of Waterloo" was particularly special. It is a "broken-ring ballad", she explains, one that follows the most common folk-song motif in Canada — the story of lovers who break a ring so that each can carry a part of it during a long separation. " 'The Plains of Waterloo' is the best of them. It's the prettiest and most elaborate, and it has a lovely tune."

Fowke's tapes of O.J. Abbott inspired an album for the American label Folkways, and Abbott was featured at the first Mariposa Folk Festival in 1961. Folk singers began adding his songs to their repertoire. Instead of dying with the old lumberjack, his lifetime of song had been restored to the international legacy of folk music. Last year, attending a folk festival in Ireland, Edith Fowke found herself listening to a local performer singing "The Plains of Waterloo." By way of the Ottawa Valley, O.J. Abbott, and her collecting, the song had returned to the country where it originated early in the nineteenth century.

Preserving the folk-song legacy of O.J. Abbott was one small part of the work that has made Edith Fowke

Edith Fowke

Canada's best known and most loved folklorist — even though she claims not to be particularly musical. Since the early 1950s, she has given the country a stream of books, broadcasts, and recordings of Canadian folklore — some the fruit of her own collecting, many others anthologizing the work of her colleagues and predecessors. Her contribution to saving this heritage of story and song has earned her the Order of Canada, several honorary degrees, and many other prizes. Her contribution to preserving the popular culture of the Canadian past is incalculable — but anyone who has joined in a chorus around a Canadian campfire has probably been influenced by the work of Edith Fowke.

Edith Fowke never set out to be a folklorist. Asked what got her started, she cites not pioneer Canadian folklore collectors such as Marius Barbeau or Helen Creighton (though they did become mentors), but the political organizer and leader of the NDP, David Lewis.

"I was a pacifist and a socialist, a follower of J.S. Woodsworth," Fowke says simply. She was born Edith Fulton in Lumsden, Saskatchewan, in 1913, the child of immigrants from North Ireland. She studied at the University of Saskatchewan during the Depression, and she and her husband Frank Fowke moved to Ontario at the end of the 1930s. ("There was no work in Saskatchewan"). In Toronto she wrote for magazines and journals such as the *Canadian Forum* and plunged into work with pacifist groups and political societies.

David Lewis changed her life's direction in 1952. At that time, Fowke was Education Director of the Woodsworth Foundation, founded by the CCF but run by a team of progressive intellectuals. "We wanted to be an educational foundation," she says, but their ideas did not always conform to CCF policy. That annoyed Lewis, who was welding the CCF into a disciplined political organization that could win elections. As their differences grew, the intellectuals were no match for Lewis's organizing skills. " 'Little David'," says Fowke without a trace of affection, "packed the annual meeting and took over the Foundation. He said I was a dangerous woman.

"I'd spent twelve years going to

meetings," she says. "When that happened, I quit politics and got into folklore." Folk music had appealed to her ever since she and her husband had purchased their first record player. In 1950 she had persuaded CBC Radio to begin "Folk Song Time," for which she selected the music and wrote scripts. "Folk Song Time" did not focus on Canadian music, but whenever they played a Canadian song, requests poured in for more information.

Those requests prompted her to compile her first anthology, *Folk Songs of Canada*, which was published in 1954 by Waterloo Music Company of Waterloo, Ontario. "They knew nothing about book publishing," Fowke laughs, "and they let us do what we wanted!" *Folk Songs of Canada* provided words and music for many songs that are now familiar standards ("When The Ice Worms Nest Again" is just one) and it has never gone out of print. It was joined in 1957 by *Folk Songs of Quebec*, for which she provided singable English translations. (For these and most of her later works, a co-author has set out the musical notations.)

Broadcasts and anthologies put Fowke in touch with folklore collectors in the United States and Britain, and she soon met the two giants of Canadian folklore. Since 1911 Marius Barbeau of the National Museum had been collecting folklore, mostly in Quebec but as far west as British Columbia. And since 1929, Helen Creighton had recorded thousands of songs in Nova Scotia. "It was with Helen Creighton that I first heard traditional singers," Fowke recalls, and soon she was inspired to begin her own collecting.

Little folklore research had been done in Ontario when she started in 1957. "There were no Canada Council grants for folklore when I first went to the Peterborough area," she says. Instead, she went collecting each summer on her holidays. Finding singers by word of mouth, she recorded them in their kitchens and parlours on a cumbersome reel-to-reel tape recorder too heavy for her to carry unaided. Some folklorists spend more time getting to know their singers than recording, she says, but she found most of her informants perfectly comfortable in spontaneous, unaccompanied singing. "I just plunged in. If they said they did not know many or had forgotten all the good ones, I would ask them to sing just one song. Usually after I played it back to them, they would sing anything they knew."

In that fashion, Fowke collected more than a thousand traditional songs. None of her sources had a larger repertoire than Orillia-born LaRena Clark, who seemed to remember every song ever sung by her parents and grandparents. "Her four grandparents were English, Irish, American, and French-Canadian, and she learned songs from all of them. They were good songs too, many not known from anywhere else." Fowke's tape recordings became the basis for albums by Clark, Abbott, Peterborough's Tom Brandon, and others, and her research around Ontario made her one of the leading collectors of Anglo-Canadian songs.

In the 1960s, Fowke branched out from folk songs to children's lore. The songs, games, riddles, and skipping chants she collected from Ontario schoolkids became the basis for her most popular book and album, *Sally Go Round the Sun* (later joined by *Ring Around the Moon* and *Red Rover, Red Rover*). She also collected tales and legends, to become a triple-threat folklorist. As with songs, most of her own collecting of stories and children's lore has been in Ontario, but relentless anthologizing has given her an unmatched knowledge of folklore right across Canada.

Fowke had been presenting research papers to Canadian and American folklore societies for years. In 1971 she left broadcasting and began teaching folklore at York University in Toronto. (Now professor emeritus, she still teaches a ballads course there.) Folklore has become something of an academic growth industry, and Fowke finds she misses the days when everyone knew everyone at folklore-studies conferences. Yet Memorial University of Newfoundland remains the only university in English Canada with a full-scale folklore department. "In 1971 I thought, Great, we'll get another folklorist and another, and we'll create a folklore department at York. Instead I was the last person appointed in the English department for many years."

What can folklore tell us about English Canada's popular traditions? "It's the Irish that dominate in folklore," Fowke says at once. "I think the Scots had too much of John

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Knox. They couldn't let themselves enjoy their singing. It is the Catholics — the Irish and the Highland Scots — that kept up the traditional stories and songs."

Across eastern and central Canada, Fowke declares, the lumber industry provided the vital network for preserving and spreading songs. "Often when you went collecting, you had to ask for shanty songs, the songs they sang all winter when they were shut up in the lumber shanties. Farmers and even sailors went to the camps for the winter, and lumbermen took songs with them from camp to camp."

Most North American folk songs have European origins. Edith Fowke estimates that four out of five Anglo-Canadian folk songs were brought here from the British Isles. (Surprisingly, the comparable proportion is even higher for French Canada. Despite French Canada's long history, it has been estimated that 90% of its songs and stories have roots in France.) Because much of this traditional lore had not survived in Europe itself, Canadian folklorists have become part of an international exchange of songs and expertise. One song collected in Nova Scotia by Helen Creighton seems to have been unknown in Britain for three hundred years.

Still, there are uniquely Canadian ballads and songs. Fowke remembers hearing Tom Brandon singing "The Twelfth of July," about a riot in 1878 in Montreal. When she checked the newspaper files of the *Montreal Gazette*, the song proved to be surprisingly faithful to the reported events. And there is not much doubt that "When The Ice Worms Nest Again" (first made popular when Fowke anthologized it in her 1954 book) is uniquely Canadian.

That raises the question — just what is folklore and how old and traditional must it be? "There are as many definitions as there are folklorists," Fowke laughs. "But I think it has to be spread by oral tradition, and it has to last. 'The Squid Jigging Ground' [written by Newfoundland poet A.R. Scammell in 1928] has become part of the folk tradition, and so have some of Woody Guthrie's songs. But not Gordon Lightfoot — at least not yet. Most of what we call folk music now is written by individuals for their own performance or for profit. There is nothing wrong with that, but it is not folklore."

Is there a lot of traditional folklore yet to be collected in Canada? "I don't think there is a lot still to be collected outside Newfoundland," says Fowke cautiously, "but then Roy Mackenzie [a pioneer folklorist in Atlantic Canada] thought he had seen the end of the oral tradition in 1910, so I hesitate to say it is over. But there is not the same wealth, now that everyone has recordings and radios." If she is right, the work of her generation of folk collectors will never be duplicated.

Edith Fowke will be eighty in little more than a year. One would not guess that to meet her. She crackles with indignant energy as she describes her recently completed manuscript on LaRena Clark. "McGill-Queen's Press is sitting on it. I conformed to all their requirements, went through all their processes. I sent it in in August — and they are sitting on it!" Six months probably seems a blink of the eye to an academic press, but it is clear that anyone who cannot move fast falls a long way behind Edith Fowke.

In recent years she has discovered the personal computer as the perfect tool for her research and writing. With its help, she now has two other books seeking publishers and three more in the works: one on Canadian legends, one on women's songs, and one on bawdy songs ("A student from Guelph who was supposed to know a lot of folk songs came to see me. All his folk songs came from records — but the ones he sings with his rugby team go back hundreds of years!").

A conversation with Edith Fowke easily ranges far beyond folklore. Her array of causes has stretched from folk music journals to writers' societies to the committee that defended Japanese-Canadian internees as early as 1943. And her friendships have ranged just as widely. Prairie painter Illingsworth Kerr is a fellow native of Lumsden, Saskatchewan, and she has a copy of his memoirs inscribed "To the little Fulton kid who made good." She credits one of her professors, longtime CCF activist Carlyle King, with helping make her both a pacifist and a writer. Writer and broadcaster Harry Boyle supported her first CBC folk music program, announcer Lamont Tilden ("the best in the business") hosted it, and historian and artist C.H.J. Snider brought his schooner crew to sing songs of the Great Lakes for her.

Historian Frank Underhill and critic Northrop Frye were allies from the ill-fated Woodsworth Foundation. And she has known all the leading figures from a half-century of folklore, from Barbeau and Creighton through singers Pete Seeger and Oscar Brand to international scholars such as Britian's Hamish Henderson, whose namesake, a West Highland terrier named Hamish, valiantly guards the Fowkes' front door.

With such a wealth of events and friendships to recall, does she have an autobiography developing somewhere inside that computer? "Well, I have done a little work on a collection of sketches I call 'My Remarkable Friends'."

And does David Lewis have a chapter there? "No. Though perhaps he should get a paragraph. Little David was the best thing that happened to me — though I could have killed him at the time."

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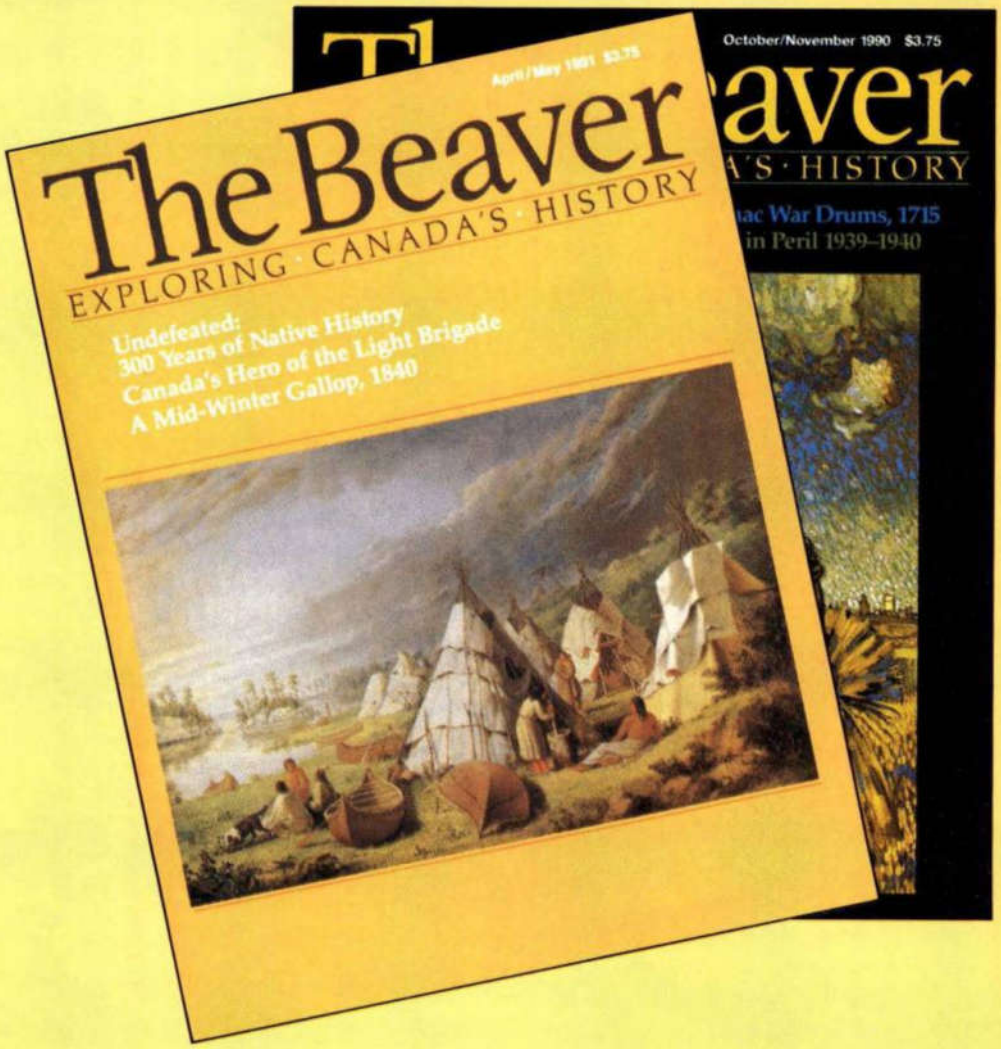

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